

9

八男

って、それは
ないでしょう!

著 Y・A



MFブックス

Hachinan tte, Sore wa Nai Deshou!

Book 9

by Y.A

Novel Updates

Translation Group: [Infinite Novel Translations](#)

Epub: [Trollo WN/LN EPUB](#)

Chapter 82 – High Earl Mizuho

We, who escaped the coup d'état which took place in Bardiche, did nothing except having the carriage travel towards the north.

We encountered a pursuit party of Duke Nürnberg's troops once when we were travelling the northern main road and a second time after we turned into the branch road through Earl Mizuho Country, but all of them were flashily torn to pieces by Katharina's spell 『Wind Cutter』.

Don't they have sufficient coordination with their allies thanks to the communication blockade?

The rebel army didn't let overly able magicians participate in the pursuit.

They chased us while releasing Fire Balls and such, however having all of it blocked by Katharina's 『Magic Barrier』, they got counter-attacked and killed by her.

『High-ranking magicians won't appear in a pursuit.』 (Katharina)

『I guess they are busy with seizing the centre.』 (Wendelin)

Katharina talks to me while retrieving the magic bags and equipment of the magicians she defeated.

She seems to act completely like a bandit, but this is also how battlefields works, Burkhart-san said.

『No matter how celebrated and powerful the opponent, they become simple headless corpses once they die. Their bodies rot and turn into fodder for beasts. The weak are killed and have everything stolen from them.』 (Burkhart)

『Burkhart-san, do you have battlefield-experience?』 (Wendelin)

『It's because me and Burkhart-dono were active as adventurers for many years. At places where the eyes of the authorities don't reach, such things happen as well if sly old adventurers do their work, and you have no other choice but to understand that, Earl Baumeister.』 (Armstrong)

It's no wonder that Doushi and Burkhart-san kill people without any hesitation.

It's only natural since they have experienced it already. Even we turned into quite skilful murderers over this whole day.



“Therese-dono, what kind of country is the 『Earl Mizuho Country』?”

“For us it's a country with quite a different cultural shape.” (Therese)

Except for the times when we have the horses rest, we spent all our time moving, but once we travel for the whole day we will arrive in Earl Mizuho Country, and will apparently be able to take a breather.

I try asking Therese, who sits opposite of me inside the carriage, about Earl Mizuho Country.

“In the old times, still before the founding of Holy Empire Urquhart, it existed as an old country of an ethnic group.” (Therese)

There are many people with black hair and black eyes. It seems to be an independent country possessing an unique culture.

“Since they are even older than the Lan tribe which is the major ethnic group of Philip Dukedom, their existence is known to the empire.” (Therese)

The Great Basin Akitsu*, which is adjacent to Philip Dukedom, is their living sphere. Their population is about 1.2 million people. *(T/N: Leaving it as Japanese pronunciation like anything else related to Mizuho Country)*

Given that it's a basin the summers are hot and the winters are cold, but due to the abundance of water and the intensity in the changes between hot and cold temperatures, delicious rice is cultivated in paddy fields as staple food. It seems to be famous even as special product.

We can harvest large quantities of rice in the southern Baumeister Earldom and below as well, but if we talk about taste, it appears that the Earl Mizuho Country's domestically grown rice has an overwhelmingly superior evaluation. Which reminds me, there were many of Japan's famous rice-producing areas in Hokuriku *(T/N: part of Honshu, lies west of Tokyo)* and the Tohoku region *(T/N: northernmost six prefectures of Honshu)* with their intense variations of cold and hot temperatures.

In addition it seems they are the best by far in crafted goods, made with skilful handwork, and magic tool production technologies.

Leading quite the wealthy life among the subjects of Holy Empire Urquhart, they entertain visitors, who come to their territory, courteously.

There are also many places which earn their income by expanding to other territories with large companies and carpenter associations. They became what is called on earth overseas merchants.

“(They resemble Japanese people...)” (Wendelin)

“Clothes, books, food, buildings, all of it is unique. They have been built in Bardiche as well.” (Therese)

Apparently it’s the architectural structures with tiled roofs and temple-styled buildings, I saw at the time when we arrived in Bardiche, which are referred to as Mizuho Style.

From my point of view, I couldn’t see it as anything but common Japanese style though.

“Usually most of them are docile, but once it comes to battle, they turn absolutely atrocious.” (Therese)

The knights, which are called samurai, defend their own territory with a struggle to the death by wielding their single-edged swords which are called katana.

Or rather, no matter what I hear, it’s the ancient Japan itself.

“They are a group who stayed on the side of the Lan tribe. The empire dispatched soldiers to suppress them many times over.” (Therese)

All the subjugations ended in failure. They also suffered enormous losses, but the empire’s side suffered horrible losses each of those times, too.

“The empire in those days expanded its territory in all four cardinal directions. However, since the losses of the Mizuho expeditionary forces were each time disastrous, its advances in the other directions stopped every time as well.” (Therese)

And yet they regularly dispatched troops until the Philip household gained total control of the Lan tribe’s soil, but before long, at the time where the number of allied soldiers, who disembarked on the journey to the other world due to the people of Mizuho, reached into the dozens of 10.000 soldiers, the

emperor at that time gave in and recognised their autonomy in the end.

“It’s because they don’t demand any other territory besides the Great Basin Akitsu. Being appointed to a special peerage called High Earl, their territory was named as Earl Country and they were treated differently from other earldoms. With the conditions that they yield diplomatic authority to Holy Empire Urquhart and a yearly paid tribute, Mizuho Country’s continuance was approved.” (Therese)

Even that diplomatic authority is in short something like telling them to not negotiate with Helmut Kingdom on their own accord.

“The empire feared an alliance being formed between the people of Mizuho and Helmut Kingdom.” (Therese)

Earl Mizuho Country was established like this, but once they attained peace, the people of Mizuho became docile.

They accept tourists as well. Their popularity for high-class items such as high-quality fabric, alcohol, commodity, handicraft and magic tools, is high.

“It’s also the people of Mizuho who fished in my Philip Dukedom first.” (Therese)

Even though they are living in a basin with no sea, they love sea fish for some reason. Half of those fishing in the Philip Dukedom seem to be people of Mizuho.

“There are many people working away from home. They are well-informed about the knowledge about edible fish, the methods of processing and the means of preservation and transportation. The haul limits*, the establishment of fish reefs, aquacultures and such, all that knowledge is from them. Also, they dry strange seaweed and create tough rods similar to wood out of a fish called skipjack tuna or such. They are an eccentric lot who are usually gentle.”

(Therese) *(T/N: Quite sarcastic is that the modern Japan is the worst fishing country abiding to no international haul limit rules, but authors can dream, can’t they?)*

“(It cameee~~~! A typically Japanese culture appeared~~~!)” (Wendelin)

To me, whose mind went haywire due to the murdering in the imperial

capital, it's a reward after a long time.

I encountered a state possessing a Japanese-styled culture in this western-styled fantasy world.

Sightseeing, food and culture, I have to genuinely enjoy these during our stay there.

"It's because Philip Dukedom and Mizuho Earldom are adjoining with each other. I won't mind even if we stay for a night. No, should we stay for several days?" (Therese)

"To request reinforcements?" (Wendelin)

"That's how it is." (Therese)

Because the survival and actions of the other prince-electors and nobles is unknown, Therese has to first start with the task of gathering the northern neighbouring feudal lords.

"Therese-sama, won't that Earl Mizuho Country assist in Duke Nürnberg's coup d'état? What I heard from your story, their treatment is mostly that of an independent state..." (Elise)

I understand Elise's worry.

From Earl Mizuho Country's point of view, it will be fine if their current treatment is guaranteed, even with Duke Nürnberg as emperor.

"On the contrary, it's not like that." (Therese)

Duke Nürnberg tried to even kill Therese.

In order to centralize the authority of the emperor, he plans to remove the prince-electors.

"That man's national policy is that of a powerful empire which was unified into one entity. Something like Earl Mizuho Country, which hasn't yielded to the empire even after thousands of years, is likely a hindrance. As a matter of fact, there were troubles with the treatment of the people of Mizuho who are staying in Nürnberg Dukedom." (Therese)

Based on the drastic deficit in trade balance, Mizuho's funds of companies and workshops, which have expanded into Nürnberg Dukedom, have been burdened with large amounts of monetary tariffs due to the reason of them

oppressing the management of the domestic merchants. The confrontation between both parties seems to intensify.

“If it’s him, he would likely aim for a complete conquest of Earl Mizuho Country. Moreover, he will be able to obtain their technology and such.”
(Therese)

“Then his way of thinking seems to be naive...”

He should realize that if the empire attacks with 1 million troops, a complete conquest of Earl Mizuho Country probably isn’t impossible.

However, afterwards a large amount of male providers, who possess technology and productivity, will have been killed in action. The empire would need to take care of the ruined, former Earl Mizuho Country’s territory. Given that their resistance will be extreme, there’s no meaning in an unreasonable conquest either.

That’s probably the reason why the empire is approving of Earl Mizuho Country’s continuance.

“From Duke Nürnberg’s point of view, he is believing that it will be fine if there’s a restoration of the destruction afterwards. If he integrates Earl Mizuho Country into the empire and makes the people of Mizuho submit by using a large budget and taking a few decades, it will turn into a plus for the new empire when regarded at long term.” (Therese)

“A rigid ultranationalist.”

“He is troublesome because he has solid supporters outside and inside his territory which can be considered as his private domain or own country.”
(Therese)

You can even say that the coup d’etat was performed so skilfully because there were a number of supporters in the imperial army as well.

In addition, magic tools and spells for communication and movement have been sealed away.

The empire’s government and the nobles shouldn’t have escaped the chaos until now.

The possibility is also high that they have surrendered to the coup d’etat forces without any time to consider it.

“This is bothersome...”

“I don’t think that he has brooded over it to such an extent before though. He might have felt a sense of impending danger after receiving a report about that after all.” (Therese)

“That?” (Wendelin)

“Here. It’s what thee assisted to get operational, Wendelin” (Therese)

It’s the huge magic airship which is a legacy of the historic ruins and was successfully restarted by using the magic gem of the ancient undead dragon I subjugated by chance. Recently it was christened as 『Lingaia』 and the huge ship with its over-all-length of 400 meters was safely placed in commission. Currently it should be in the middle of performing training in order to investigate outside the continent.

“It’s because thee were able to establish a lead even in the number of common 100-meter-class large magic airships.” (Therese)

The ratio of the air forces’ war potential has expanded up to 2.2 to 1. This made Duke Nürnberg apparently feel quite a sense of danger.

“In other words, it’s my fault?” (Wendelin)

“At very least Duke Nürnberg believes that to be so.” (Therese)

I see, that’s why he stared at me with such a sharp gaze.
Since his usual look is sharp too, he might have simply looked at me though.

“In short you are telling me to kill Duke Nürnberg for the sake of having a peaceful future?” (Wendelin)

“I think that I want thee to participate in the war as mercenary if possible. There’s no other way but to kill Duke Nürnberg. He is dangerous.” (Therese)

Based on his fluctuating radical beliefs, he even turned towards the use of force.

Large damage will be done to the empire due to his actions. Naturally dissatisfaction will gush out from the surroundings, if they can’t get compensation by crushing the Duke Nürnberg household.

Something like an easy-going nation, that lets the ringleader of a rebellion live,

doesn't exist in any world.

"Before that there's also the possibility that my group will be killed once and for all by Duke Nürnberg who succeeded in the coup d'état." (Therese)

"That's ill omened..."

"There are also uncertain parts in a war." (Therese)

There was the worrying aspect of the southern, western and eastern nobles' course of action, but as the communication blockade was tormenting us even here, we couldn't obtain any information at all.

"You can't count on them. I guess the lot, which went to Bardiche for the enthronement of the new emperor, has been captured or killed by the coup d'état forces."

Therese wants to gather the northern lords before Duke Nürnberg dispatches a punitive force towards the north.

It's crucial that she carries that out in a hurry first, I guess.

Fortunately there were many among the majority of the northern lords who departed from the imperial capital on the same day or the next day after the new emperor got crowned.

It seems that countryside nobles don't have spare time to the degree I have been expecting.

"However, it's something annoying, that communication blockade." (Therese)

The hand-held magic communication device, we are possessing, stays silent even now although we are considerably far away from the imperial capital. The part of restricting the magic types which are possible to be jammed widened the effective range quite a bit.

At this rate, it should have become impossible to operate magic airships and communication devices in the northern parts of Helmut Kingdom as well.

"I worry about Baumeister Earldom." (Ina)

It's as Ina said.

If it's a situation where magic airships can't be moved, it will cause large difficulties to the development.

“There’s no other choice but to believe that Roderich will handle it somehow.” (Wendelin)

I didn’t think that being unable to communicate will be this irritating. I regarded it as reckless coup d’etat, but Duke Nürnberg might actually have a chance of success.

“Really, he doesn’t do anything decent, that bastard with his evil eyes.”

Moreover, that guy’s an ikemen.

I hear that his popularity among women is high thanks to that, but I end up believing that he’s a fellow that’s not worth to be trusted as human with only that much.

By no means does that imply that I feel frustrated because of losing to him with my face.

“I feel calm and enjoy being at your side, dear.” (Elise)

“It’s as Elise says. I think I would choke if Duke Nürnberg was my husband.”
(Ina)

“If Ina-chan can’t handle it, someone like me will die by suffocation.” (Luise)

Elise, Ina and Luise start mentioning that they aren’t very good with Duke Nürnberg with his scary atmosphere although he is an ikemen.

It seems I would be warned about the amount of my meals by him. I would hate to be looked down on by his stabbing eyes.” (Wilma)

“That’s right, isn’t it? I can see a type of feeling like *follow me without complaining since I’m right*.” (Katharina)

Is it fine to say that he has an inborn despotic character?
Unexpectedly Wilma’s and Katharina’s opinions might peck at Duke Nürnberg’s true identity.

“I’m absolutely fine with Wend-sama’s type of husband.” (Wilma)

“Me too.” (Katharina)

“Everyone, thank you!” (Wendelin)

Overcome by emotions, I hug the five of them one after the other.

Even I have parts which can win against Duke Nürnberg.

“I don’t understand. From Duke Nürnberg’s point of view, Wend is probably a target of jealousy...”

“I pass on such complicated, internal story.”

I drove Erw, who stated his opinion in a whisper, towards Doushi with silence.

“Erwin-lad, a man is all about muscles and ability!” (Armstrong)

Doushi forcibly took a pose emphasizing his muscles inside the confined carriage.

It’s a pushy logic, but for some reason I feel its persuasiveness if Doushi is the one saying it.

“No, it’s the charm of an adult which only grown men can possess.” (Burkhart)

Next Burkhart-san, who recovered his mana already, participated in the talk, too.

“Honestly, either is fine. Don’t you think so, Therese-sama?”

“Thou husband seems to also have many, various problems, but let’s take a rest in Earl Mizuho Country for now.”

While having such a chat inside, the carriage arrived at the border territory of Earl Mizuho Country.

The Earl Mizuho Country consists of the Great Basin Akitsu and a mountain range enclosing it.

Since the mountain range doesn’t have that much of elevation, a highway to make the passage of carriages possible has been laid out, but an inspection place had been created at the entrance of the mountain road.

Guards are standing at the entrance of a building which is similar to a simple fortress.

They are resembling Japanese people with their black hair and black eyes, but the size of their bodies has no great difference to the average height of the people of this world.

Once I looked properly, their garments had an appearance similar to the samurai of Edo period and three katanas were affixed to their waists.

On the left they have two long swords which can be regarded as Japanese

swords, and on the right there's one sword similar to a short wakizashi.

“Three katanas, huh...? The 『Battou* Unit』 has been added to the defence.”
(Therese) *(T/N: Battou = drawing a sword (and striking in the same motion), imagine Kenshin the Battousai, probably an unit specializing on sword drawing techniques)*

“『Battou Unit』?” (Wendelin)

“In the empire they are called a unit mass producing war dead with ridicule put into the name.” (Therese)

Common soldiers don't wear anything but two short and long katanas, but since the elite Battou Unit has been granted 『Magic Katana』's which are magic tools, they wear three katanas.

“A 『Magic Katana』 is a sophisticated magic tool.” (Therese)

It appears that they cut and kill their enemies by cladding the katana with their preferred attribute of mana through an all-purpose magic tool.

“I happened to see it at a joint military exercise of our feudal armies. A samurai, who clad his magic katana with fire-attributed mana, cut through a steel armour target with a diagonal slash from his shoulder.” (Therese)

“What's that? How scary.”

“I heard a story that a military force consisting of 10.000 soldiers melted and vanished after being attacked by a Battou Unit of a thousand in the past.”
(Therese)

It seems that was the end of the empire's invasion armies achieved at the past Earl Mizuho Country subjugations.

Of 20.000 soldiers, 15.000 were casualties and the rest escaped.

Although it seems that the 『Battou Unit』 lost half of its numbers as well, the loss ratio is weird no matter how you count it.

I wondered whether it was exaggerated, but there appears to be no mistake as it has been recorded in the military annals of the imperial army which suffered the loss.

“They have no interest in territory outside the Great Basin Akitsu, but it's not

like they are lenient towards invaders.”

“Even though it will be fine if you mass produce those magic katanas.”

“That’s impossible.” (Therese)

Since even the empire isn’t stupid, there exists an unit equipped with magic swords which had the same trick added to their swords.

However, it seems that they can’t take a single blow from a magic katana.

I hear that there’s apparently a difference completely separating them in performance of the equipment.

“You can avoid a magic katana’s blow or, in case of Wendelin, he will deploy a firm 『Magic Barrier』, I guess? There are no options besides those.” (Therese)

“How about plundered items?” (Luise)

“They become unusable before one month passes.” (Therese)

Therese answered Luise’s question while showing a bitter smile.

“On top of its structure being complicated, it looks like it’s necessary to regularly give it a special maintenance.” (Therese)

By switching a lever to fire, earth, water and wind, it’s possible to freely clad it in an attribute’s mana. In addition there’s also a lever to adjust to the magic capacity included.

If mana is loaded into the embedded magic crystal, you can use it for a while, but it ends up returning to a regular katana losing its usefulness all of a sudden before even one month passes.

“It appears to have even a maintenance of the katana’s blade itself. The empire’s magic tool craftsmen have attempted to analyse and reproduce it as well, however they haven’t reached any significant results either.” (Therese)

The technology around the katanas has been strictly concealed. It also serves as proof that the magic tool production technology of the people of Mizuho is outstanding.

“It seems that Duke Nürnberg isn’t pleased with that aspect either though.” (Therese)

Since they are treacherous friends nesting within the empire, he feels obliged

to get rid of Earl Mizuho Country.
As he seems to harbour such notion, Therese believes that it's possible to build an united front with them.

“Didn’t that High Earl Mizuho-sama go to Bardiche?”

“It’s because Earl Mizuho Country is essentially a different country. It has been decided that he will have an audience bringing congratulatory gifts after the emperor has been enthroned for a while and the situation has calmed down.” (Therese)

At that occasion the current Earl Mizuho Country’s position would be re-acknowledged by the new emperor.
This also seems to be a task of a new emperor to be carried out at the beginning.

“Accordingly, that gent hasn’t been dragged in like the other nobles.”
(Therese)

The coup d’etat has broken out three days after the enthronement of the new emperor.
The nobles, who returned to their territories ahead of time, escaped the disaster, but of the prince-electors lords who were able to flee it’s probably only her, Therese said.

“Anyway, I have to raise an army. Either I die or Duke Nürnberg does. There won’t be any other conclusion besides that.” (Therese)

The carriage, we had boarded, successfully and safely entered the fortress which is at the national border of Earl Mizuho Country.



————— End of Part 1 —————

“It’s a success.”

“There were some blunders though.”

Right at the same time, a single youth sat on the emperor’s throne located in the Imperial Palace of Bardiche.
His name is Max Erhart Armin von Nürnberg. Changing from being a prince-

elector of this Holy Empire Urquhart, he is now the mastermind of the coup d'état.

“This has also happened thanks to you.”

The coup d'état was carried out by Duke Nürnberg household's feudal army, but naturally if it was only them, they would have no prospect of winning. Accordingly he secretly called out for the participation of the commissioned officers, who have the same views as him, within the imperial army and they cooperated by gaining control of the military bases. They also carried out the arrest and murder of nobles.

“There's no necessity to kill small fries. Place them under house arrest.”
(Nürnberg)

“I will attend to it right away.”

At any rate, their territory can't do anything during the absence of their family head.

Since communication has been blocked, their functions have partially fallen after parting with their family heads which are their brains.

“On the other hand, all of the prince-electors died.”

However, this fact has been hidden.

Duke Nürnberg desires a Holy Empire Urquhart with a centralized authoritarian rule by the emperor.

Prince-electors are unnecessary for that, but seeing that he can't suppress them immediately, it's easier to seal their movements by taking the family heads as hostages.

“For the first stage, the maximum priority lies on the suppression of the surrounding territories of Bardiche.”

Almost all southern nobles are obeying the Duke Nürnberg household. They are believing that they will be able to receive favourable treatment for their territories and positions if Duke Nürnberg, who is their patron to begin with, becomes the new emperor.

Greedy people are easy to use.

“There are already those among the captured nobles who are yielding to our

side. Order that lot to return to their territories and to prepare their soldiers.”

Once the first stage of gaining total control of the southern and central areas finished, there’s an opponent which has to be defeated first.

Duke Nürnberg’s look shifted towards the northern part of the map he is looking at.

“Therese, were you able to run away successfully?” (Nürnberg)

She was the sole prince-electoral lord who ended up getting away. It was the person called Duchess Philip.

“That woman, she will gather the northern lords and come to attack us in reverse.”

“Earl Mizuho Country, too?”

“That country is well aware of my thinking. They know fully that I will dispatch soldiers, once they form an alliance.” (Nürnberg)

“They are a formidable enemy.”

“If I crush them altogether, it will be convenient for the distant future.”
(Nürnberg)

From Duke Nürnberg’s point of view, the emperors until now were too lenient.

Just because they lost many times after sending soldiers half-assedly, they have been approving of that country’s independence.

Thanks to that, the natural-born subjects are poor and suffering in the empire due to Mizuho’s economical and technological strength.

Defeating the people of Mizuho and retaliating against them who have stolen their assets and technologies, will give birth to a true, unified empire.

No, it will be reborn.

“However, I’m uneasy about a subjugation with our current military forces... Should we proceed with the suppression of the west and east and use their military forces as well?”

“Of course we will try that, but I won’t suppress them with armed might.”
(Nürnberg)

I will tell those, whose family heads have been taken hostage, that their family heads will be released if they help with the defeat of Duchess Philip and the Earl Mizuho Country by dispatching soldiers.

With this it will be plenty with just the nobles who send soldiers.

“If we suppress them unskillfully, there will be victims among the feudal army of the Duke Nürnberg household and the imperial army whom we can trust the most. We will defeat them with our best elites and large numbers.”

The person who might come to challenge them at the present time, is only Duchess Philip.

Speaking in reverse, if they defeat her, the rest will work itself out later.

“Even if we hire a large quantity of soldiers to suppress them forcibly, there’s also the possibility of them betraying us if Therese is doing well. Our army is a gathering of elites. They should definitely be able to defeat her.”

“However, there’s one thing I’m worried about...”

“Earl Baumeister, eh...?”

Duke Nürnberg has only one opinion about Earl Baumeister.

He is an existence that will cause damage to Holy Empire Urquhart in the future. Actually, even now, he is known as the main culprit for the economic disparity and air forces’ military strength difference between Holy Empire Urquhart and Helmut Kingdom.

It would be fine if he worked for himself after betraying Helmut Kingdom. I ordered the soldiers to kill him if that doesn’t work out, but that developed into a failure at the site.

“Did those four brothers really persuade Earl Baumeister?”

“That I don’t know.”

The real problem is that the unit, which was in charge of the guest house, was completely annihilated.

All of the soldiers and knights had their heads broken, their bodies cut to pieces, their heads blown off and holes in their abdomen. It has been reported that the actual site turned into a gruesome spectacle.

“Moreover, those four brothers were killed at the standby location of the

stagecoaches.”

The four brothers, without fighting with them near the mansion, have been killed at the standby location of the stagecoaches and Earl Baumeister’s group can be considered to have escaped alongside Therese.

Together with the soldiers who were with them, there are mostly no corpses remaining. Burned and carbonized scraps of a robe were the sole remaining proof.

“Weren’t they hopeful young magicians?”

Duke Nürnberg who isn’t a magician, lacks the ability to differentiate their strength.

Hearing the reports, I have no choice but to differentiate by their spells which were presented at the skill exhibition gathering of the magicians.

The rest is from their achievements, I guess?

If I remember correctly, Earl Baumeister has the accomplishment of having killed dragons.

However as that’s a matter of chance, even the four brothers should be able to do that if I order them to eliminate a dragon.

Duke Nürnberg had such belief.

“Armstrong’s strength is known from the past. Ringstadt is a famous magician. There were also the dragon-slaying Earl Baumeister and 『Storm』. However, is the difference between those four and the four brothers that much?”

“As expected, I can’t believe that all of them are safe, but...”

This elderly man, who is one of the leaders of the imperial army, isn’t a magician either, but he has heard the combat ability forecast of famous magicians in Helmut Kingdom from someone who is well-informed in that. Certainly, they are excelling, but there are several famous magicians even in the empire who won’t lose to them. They shouldn’t have lost that one-sidedly.

“Surely it’s just as you say.”

Besides, since they have many magicians, there’s no way for a group with less than 10 at most to have strength to such an extent.

It’s fine if you can stop the peerlessness of a magician with another magician.

Once that happens, the rest will be settled by the quality of the common military forces.

“There’s quite a number of civilians as magicians that possess above-advanced level mana. If we gather the intermediate and elementary levelled magicians, it will be possible to overwhelm them with numbers.”

“Defeating Helmut Kingdom’s 『Ultimate Weapon』 and 『Dragon Slayer』 with the violence of numbers, huh?”

From the standpoint of Duke Nürnberg who is a pure soldier, that plan was in the category of satisfactorily good sense.

No matter how strong they might be, it’s unlikely that they can win against organized soldiers.

The wariness towards Earl Baumeister’s party fades from within Duke Nürnberg’s mind.

The currently biggest threat is the Duke Philip household’s feudal army led by Therese.

“The feudal army of the Duke Philip household is strong, but we are better than them. Half of the imperial army is following us as well. There are also the military forces of the southern lords and the nobles who have announced their allegiance to our side.”

Having seized the capital city has become our forte after all. The majority of the western and eastern lords hesitated, but a part of them actively declared their support to us.

“There’s no meaning in an emperor who was only chosen traditionally. An emperor is an existence that leads his subjects with unwavering will and authority.”

He is a strong person and that’s why the coup d’etat succeeded.
Right after this, I will name myself the new emperor 『Holy Urquhart the First』 and strive towards the goal of controlling this continent within my reign.

“Currently the suppression of the empire’s centre and a listing of the nobles we won over takes priority. Once that’s finished, the subjugation of Duchess Philip and Earl Mizuho Country follows at last.”

Once that happens, it's fine to wait for the fruits to fall from the tree afterwards.

After all, there are no other prince-electors in this world anymore besides himself and Duchess Philip.

"We can't take Therese lightly even though she's a woman. She's completely different from the other dimwitted prince-electors. We will prepare the soldiers while bracing ourselves."

"As you command."

Even while saying that, the shape of the already unified Holy Empire Urquhart floats in Duke Nürnberg's mind.

"By the way, it's the aforementioned device, but..."

"Is there something wrong with the aforementioned device?"

Duke Nürnberg got pissed off in his mind for being disturbed during his long-awaited time of enjoyable imaginations, but he is an important collaborator. He asked the imperial army's leader while showing a smile.

"That can continue to run for a while."

"However, it will be too much of an impediment towards the economic activities of merchants and such..."

"I guess so."

However, from Duke Nürnberg's point of view, the merits are big.
Stealing the means of communication between nobles, it's possible to make them lose their way and isolate them. Operating the device gives us the upper hand.

Since our side has previously reinforced the means of communication and reconnaissance by spies and fast horses, that state is advantageous. Even as for the economic activity, it is effective to grasp the major dealers by their necks.

Besides, they should have noticed it right away.

Transportation expenses for cargo and such will rise, but that will make it possible to get the upper hand in the price competition of large-scaled merchants.

That greedy bunch will probably obey while complaining publicly.

“However, there will be complaints from the merchants of the central area.”

“The empire is heading towards the unification of the continent. For that cause the cooperation of merchants with large amounts of capital is necessary. Small and medium merchants will be crushed and other challengers will appear right away. It will be fine if we treat only those, who stand out, favourably.”

“Haa...”

And, that device.

It changed his fate. The biggest cause for continuing to use the 『Magic Obstruction Device』 that used technology from the era of the Ancient Magic Civilization and which was excavated from a huge underground ruin located in Nürnberg Dukedom, is for the sake of lowering the power of magicians on the battlefield.

“Do you know why a dragon is powerful?”

“Is it because it releases a powerful breath?”

“There’s that as well, but it’s because it flies in the sky. Since humans can’t fly, they are weak to attacks from above.”

That was also the primary factor why the number of magic airships was counted as military force.

Also, Duke Nürnberg is a soldier.

He thoroughly took into account the threat of an enemy that moves in three dimensions rather than two dimensions.

“They fire spells while flying in the air. They move to their preferred position in an instant. They communicate with distant companions in an instant. If we can prevent this, it will become possible to deal with them, no matter what powerful spells a magician can release. Even in our camp there are magicians who can deploy a strong 『Magic Barrier』.”

For that reason he took the time to get the 『Magic Obstruction Device』 operational. He spread its effective range until the limits of the magic types it jams.

“About this time there might be an uproar in the northern part of Helmut Kingdom, too. Seeing that the magic airships don’t move in the north, it’s possible to simply eliminate the chance for the kingdom’s intervention. It might take some time, but my reforms will certainly become reality.”

Duke Nürnberg had absolute confidence in his own plan.



“So, how’s the situation?”

“In the area close to the northern national border, magic communication devices as well as magic airships can’t be used.”

“That’s quite the strange phenomenon.”

Moreover, at the same time, Helmut the 37th inclined his head in the royal castle in the capital Stadtbürg due to the reports having arrived from the north. Since the evening of the day before yesterday, it has suddenly become impossible to use communication magic and magic tools. The magic airships ceased to move as well.

The large ships, which are managed by the kingdom, were safe since they weren’t floating at that time, but the small ships, which have been used by nobles and such, have crashed.

According to the damage reports gathered at present, seven ships have crashed, a lot of its cargo has been lost and 89 people have lost their lives. Those heavy objects suddenly lost control at a height of several tens to several hundreds of meters and came down just like that.

It is impossible for normal humans to be able to survive that.

What was additionally painful was the reported death of two magicians. They tried to flee from the falling ships with the spell 『Flight』, but as that didn’t invoke, they crashed and died.

“The jamming of communication and movement magic ends at a specific range.”

“The cause is Holy Empire Urquhart, I guess?” (Helmut)

“It’s just as you say, Your Majesty.”

With the imperial capital Bardiche as centre, it’s very likely that areas in a

radius of 2.000 kilometers are receiving the same jamming.

The majority of the effect was on the empire's side, but that effect has also reached a part of the kingdom's northern territories.

"Definitely carry out a follow-up on the areas which have suffered damage."

"Certainly!"

There is no direct damage except the magic airships which ended up sorrowfully crashing, but it's painful that the transportation and distribution of goods by magic airships and the communication was shut down.

If that's left alone as is, there is a possibility that it would trigger a stagnation of business in the areas in range of the effect.

"It's necessary to increase the carriage trips. Also, there's the increase of messengers by horses and letters, huh...?"

Since there's no way we are able to increase it abruptly, there's no other way but to assign the remaining carriages to the north while increasing the transport by magic airships in the other areas.

However, if we do that, this will also affect the communication and transport towards the south, which boasts of a high operating ratio, at the present state.

"In my opinion there will be a lot of indirect damage."

"Is it a scheme of Holy Empire Urquhart?"

"The possibility for that is high, but it's strange."

True friends don't exist between states, but even Holy Empire Urquhart shouldn't desire war with Helmut Kingdom currently.

For this reason the government officials in charge of trade expansion negotiations and their families were sent to this time's Friendship Visit Group.

"To begin with, most of those responsible for trade have already returned to our country."

Given that the emperor has died and the election deciding the new emperor has started, they were made to return to their country after leaving behind a part of a dozen personnel in charge of gathering intelligence and to attend the enthronement ceremony of the new emperor.

“Communication with the group, that stayed behind, ceased as well.”

“That’s because communication is impossible.”

Even communication to an area which isn’t affected from an area which is being jammed, and the reverse of that, has become impossible.

“Communication with the embassy has stopped as well.”

Magicians, who can use 『Transmission』, and a stationary large-scaled magic communication device were placed there, but they can’t get in touch with those either.

“Is it even impossible to get a contact to the liaison on-site?”

“It seems this is no good, too.”

Either side’s foreigners have been prohibited to go outside of the capital, but illegal spies and spying networks by natives, which were organized by the spies, naturally exist.

That means even contact to them has become impossible.

“I wonder whether you are able to contact Doushi and Earl Baumeister, Your Majesty, but...”

“This might work.”

Helmut the 37th, takes out the small hand-held magic communication device, he bought from Earl Baumeister, from his pocket.

It was highly efficient and handy, but it doesn’t make contact after all.

Not only are they unable to contact the other side, but the communication itself is obviously hindered.

“Will they be alright?”

Communication with Earl Baumeister, who is the cornerstone of the south’s economic development, and the Royal Head Magician has stopped.

If something has happened to them, the kingdom’s south will fall in a state of chaos.

“They are probably safe. Rather than that, it’s necessary to raise the alert level of the royal army to a level of a quasi-war.”

Helmut the 37th didn't worry about the safety of the two at all. No matter what, he couldn't imagine the existence of anyone capable of killing them.

"Quasi-war level?"

It's an arrangement to be prepared at any time even if it turns into war. For this level to be invoked was actually the first time in 200 years.

"By looking at the circumstances, this jamming of communication is something artificial."

Even for a sophisticated magician it's difficult. There's also the matter of continuing it over time.

Since we can't expect that there's no legacy of the era of the Ancient Magic Civilization in the empire's underground either, there was the possibility that someone dug up such item and used it.

"For what reason?"

"That will be seen. I don't think it's only for a rebellion though."

It's right after the enthronement of the new emperor.

Someone disapproved of that and raised an army.

Considering the difference in military forces to the imperial army, if it's for the sake of mutually stopping communication, foreign nobles will be blocked from gathering intelligence and their movements will be sealed.

There should be no mistake that they are planning to occupy the empire's centre during that time.

"I see. Now's a chance."

"You, what are you talking about?"

"Since the empire's centre is paralysed, it's possible to win against it without even striking them with any decent moves."

Helmut the 37th faced the noble in front of him with an expression as if he was disgusted.

That noble planned an all-out-war with the empire.

"Why do we have to place our hands on a smouldering rock*?" (T/N: Author

used here “a chestnut in the fire”)

Even while being astonished, he predicted that such guys will increase if the news of the empire spread after this.

From 1.000 years ago to the time of the ceasefire 200 years ago it could be said that Helmut Kingdom was inferior to Holy Empire Urquhart.

The empire, which was early in its unification and founding, occupied the current kingdom's northern territories in the Gigant Crevice's south and ruled over them.

The empire had been driven away to the north of the Gigant Crevice at the time of the ceasefire, but perceiving the era of its southern occupation as something disgraceful, it was possible that nobles, who start advocating the occupation of the Gigant Crevice's northern area, would increase now.

I can understand them emotionally, however as a matter of fact the occupation of the Gigant Crevice's south by the past empire stole the national power of the empire itself.

Thanks to the Gigant Crevice itself it's mostly impossible to keep up supply by anything but magic airships.

Since the young people of major nobles and those, who obtained achievements, had already been appointed as nobles in the occupied areas, there was no way that they would abandon those. And if they did that, it was also possible that the emperor would be denounced in the congress.

In the end, you can even say that they pointlessly wasted personnel, goods and budget with the maintenance of the occupied territories until they retreated after losing the war.

If the kingdom occupied the empire's south by crossing the Gigant Crevice, it will probably assign young people of major nobles and people, who obtained achievements in the war, as nobles in the newly captured territories, too. And if they get into a pinch, the royal army would be dispatched as reinforcement each time that happens.

“Have you said this after considering the budget for that? You will be likely overjoyed if we push the second sons and those below into being countryside feudal lords, but have you not taken the possibility of the kingdom's financial affairs declining into account?”

“However, if it’s the current military strength of the air force...”

“Magic airships, eh? Haven’t you been told just now that those can’t be used?”

In the first place, there’s the problem how to dispatch soldiers in the current situation.

The magic airships, which are effective in crossing the Gigant Crevice, can’t be used.

There’s also the move of forcibly advancing by building a bridge, but that will cause difficulties once we try to retreat if the war progress becomes disadvantageous.

Given that communication has been blocked as well, the probability of being unable to sufficiently command the army is high as well.

“What will you do about the supply?”

“Procure it locally...”

“Do you really believe that to be possible?”

Pillaging the region we have to rule after the occupation; the military forces, which were dispatched on-site, would likely be meaninglessly worn down by local resistance movements and the military forces of the empire.

“It’s an empty theory, isn’t it?”

Helmut the 37th sighed in his mind due to the uselessness of this noble. After all he is falling far behind the nobles who are serving as ministers. Even so, somehow using even such idiot is the task of a king.

“The quasi-war preparation system is also no guarantee that the other side won’t come trying something.”

Since communication has been obstructed, we don’t know the situation of the other side.

The possibility that enemy forces will invade at the same time as abruptly stopping the communication blockade isn’t zero either.

“And, attacking now is politically unwise, too.”

“Really?”

While thinking that he can't use him after all, Helmut the 37th begins to explain it to the noble in front of him.

"If this was done by a rebellion, there's a possibility that it will benefit the rebels if we advance our soldiers while taking advantage of the opportunity."

The current war situation is unknown, but it's difficult to imagine that the rebels have seized all of the empire at the current point in time.

The chaos inside the empire might continue for a while, but what will happen if Helmut Kingdom, which is a foreign country, sends its soldiers at that point?

"Saying 『We have to oppose the foreign invaders』, it might result in helping with their gathering into one entity."

On the basis of the great cause to recover the area which was stolen by Helmut Kingdom, it's possible that the number of nobles, who sympathize with the rebels, might increase.

"Once that happens, it's very likely that it will result in an age of war once again."

The rebels should try to unify the country into one by making use of the foreign enemy.

This kind of story is something that happened often since the old days.

"And our country will have its national power stolen by maintaining the occupied territories which were just seized."

Naturally the southern development can be expected to stagnate as well.

"Well then, I wonder whether our fellow countrymen in Bardiche are safe or not..."

The concept that the empire will unlikely make a move on foreign nobles who are staying as envoys will become meaningless if the considerations up until now are true.

That's because...

"The situation of there being victims will reinforce the argument for an expedition by our country."

There are also victims due to the crashes of the magic airships.

It's also possible that I won't be able to suppress a dispatch of troops, if the number of militairs and nobles, who insist on revenge against the empire, increases.

"If they are aiming for that, it will be troublesome even if there are rebels."

By seeming to obviously act lawlessly, they are actually trying to control our movements.

"Currently we have no other choice but to carry out makeshift solutions in order to gather as much intelligence as possible."

If we do too little, it might also increase the number of nobles advocating for an expedition, but it's probably a salvation that the main faction of the army doesn't wish for a dispatch of troops, isn't it?

Minister Edgar, together with Earl Armstrong is busy in helping with the exploitation of the concessions of Herthania Valley and the south.

He couldn't believe that they will approve to a war, where it's ambiguous whether they can win or not, that easily.

There's the possibility that they might turn into expedition advocates after being told to do so by their relatives and vassals, but these kind of people are busy with the preservation of the concession leftovers as well.

Humans are creatures who won't go to war that simply if they are content.

"(It's Earl Baumeister's influence, huh...?)"

All of it was a hindsight-based opinion, but Helmut the 37th, who is a calm ruler, considers it like that.

Earl Baumeister is a man I can use after all.

"(He is together with Klimt. Earl Baumeister shouldn't die that easily either.)"

Rather, I feel sympathy with the mastermind, who caused a rebellion, while these two are in the empire.

That mastermind might possess some special feelings towards Earl Baumeister, but there's no way that man will lend help to a rebellion which adopted immature, idealistic thoughts.

If possible, he will make sure to not get involved in it. He is sure to counter-attack fiercely, if it looks like he will be harmed.

That's obvious if you look at the last days of the Margrave Browig household

which has been reported to have fallen down to 3/4th of its former economic strength.

“(Even so, the Margrave Browig household are nobles of his country, therefore that man has been considerate with them. No mercy dwells in him in regards to people and nobles of another country.)”

Those, who would try to corner him, will probably suffer severe retaliation in proportion to the degree of their cornering.

“(Well then, how will Holy Empire Urquhart’s future turn out...?)”

Will the rebellion, which I expect to be mostly true, succeed or will it fail? Holy Empire Urquhart’s national power will decline either way. In that case it will be fine if my Helmut Kingdom cultivates its national strength by advancing the southern development.

As long as Earl Baumeister exists, it’s possible. If we increase the difference in the national power between both countries, it might even become possible to annex Holy Empire Urquhart in due time.

Helmut Kingdom isn’t a particularly pacifistic state that completely denies wars. If it’s realistically possible, I won’t show any hesitation to have a war to unify the Langaia continent.

“(Anyway, currently it’s about how to gather precise information.)”

After Helmut the 37th thought for a while, he began to do as much as he can with his hands in his obligation as statesman.



“Dango! I want to eat dango!” (Wendelin)

“Earl-sama, are you a child?” (Burkhart)

“Wend, it’s probably fine if you eat it later.” (Ina)

“Is it as you say, Ina...? I will later eat both, mugwort-flavoured dango and skewered rice dango in sweet soy glaze. I...” (Wendelin)



Arriving safely in Earl Mizuho Country, we proved our social status in the fortress located along the national border and have been allowed to enter the

country just like that.

A samurai, who was equipped with a magic katana, was urgently dispatched by the fortress after they inferred the unusual events in Bardiche.

『I'm called Teruaki Muraki.』 (Teruaki)

The young man, who was called a samurai, with his youthful appearance greeted us in a really polite manner.

『Did you notice the unusual events in the imperial capital after all?』

『Eh? How?』

『By using this.』 (Teruaki)

There was one bird resting on a perch at the place the samurai called Muraki showed us.

It can be regarded as tiny hawk, but also as large swallow.

Going only by its appearance, it's a bird that appears to fly quickly.

『It's because the people of Mizuho live in the empire. You must not take their intelligence network lightly. It looks like communication spells and magic tools are no good, but if it's the Mizuho Swallow, even abnormal events in Bardiche will reach us in two ~ three days.』 (Teruaki)

It seems that Mizuho Swallow is the name of the fast-looking bird. Selective breeding is popular in Earl Mizuho Country. It appears those birds are used instead of a carrier pigeons.

『We are guaranteeing several means of communication for times like these.』 (Teruaki)

The races, propagation and selective breeding of Mizuho Swallows has spread as hobby between the people of Mizuho and thus maintaining ((such means of communication)) seems to be easy too.

『They are faster than carriages, after all.』

『That's how it is. As for Duchess Philip-sama, do you wish for a meeting with our lord as expected?』 (Teruaki)

『Correct, if possible, right away.』 (Therese)

『My lord wishes for that as well. I* shall attend as well.』 (Teruaki)

It was the first time for a person besides Roderich to appear who uses the first person 『sessha*』, but as Muraki-san is a samurai, it doesn't cause any sense of discomfort. *(T/N: First person I/me used by samurai)*

Mounting a horse, he leads the progress on the mountain road towards Earl Mizuho Country and our carriage follows him.

As we ascended the mountain road for a while, we arrived at the summit after around 30 minutes.

Once we did that, a mountain pass tea house, which can often be seen in historical plays and such, was built there. People of Mizuho, who wore Japanese-styled clothes, drank tea while eating dango at the shop front. Naturally I, who is originally a Japanese, wanted to stop by.

I wanted to drink tea while eating dango.

However, everybody has considered it as obvious to head to the lord's mansion without dropping in on the way.

You could even say that it was only natural for me, who has a different opinion in this, to make a fuss.

“Echo, go buy dango in a dash.” (Wendelin)

I carry out the plan to make Echo, who is inside the carriage, do the errand. Since he is a disagreeable guy who badly nitpicked about the attacks against people, I don't have any kind of feelings of guilt for making him run errands.

“I decline as I'm Therese-sama's retainer.” (Ebbo)

“...” (Wendelin)

It's a sound argument, but even so he's an unpleasant guy.

If he had ran off while saying 『Roger ~ssu ! 』, I would have felt inclined to regard him as slightly cute.

“Even before that, if we don't exchange money, we won't be able to shop.”

“There's an independent currency!?”

This was also evidence that Earl Mizuho Country is still an independent state. It's as Echo says, but I felt slightly irritated by him after all.

“However, in case of Early Mizuho Country subordinating to the empire, a

currency reform will come. It's not that troublesome." (Therese)

Therese adds one more brief comment.

Between Helmut Kingdom and Holy Empire Urquhart there isn't overly much difference in the currency.

Though the design of the money was different with cent as the same unit, things like the coin weight and its gold ratio had been decided in a treaty.

"One cent becomes 『one mon』, hundred cents become 『one shu』 and 10.000 cents become 『one ryo』 in Earl Mizuho Country."

It looks like the form of the currency is different, too.

However the coin weight and the gold ratio are not altered. It seems there's no difference in the currency conversion ratio.

"In that case, can we buy dango?"

"It's different if it's a large store, but if it's at the level of a tea house, they won't accept anything but Mizuho coins."

"No way~~~!" (Wendelin)

"Thee are acting selfishly at a strange place. I like that kind of gent though as they have a lovable nature. Feel relieved because thee will be able to exchange money without any commission at the money changer. Thee can even exchange the money of Helmut Kingdom." (Therese)

It can't be helped if I don't have the local currency.

I decide to stay quiet until the carriage arrives at the lord's mansion.

Once we descend the mountain road, human habitation becomes visible, but no matter how I look at it, it's a farm village of old Japan.

Since it's currently winter, the interim crop barley has been planted in the paddy fields.

Though the buildings didn't have thatch roofs made out of wood and stones, their structure was completely different from the imperial region outside because of the Japanese style.

Entering the town after the farm village, we can finally see the lord's mansion after advancing further with the carriage.

"It's an amazing castle."

Elise is surprised, but rather than about the lord's mansion, it was about the star-shaped stronghold which had a huge castle tower and was surrounded by a threefold moat.

An object that seemed to match the five-sided fortification at Osaka Castle, becomes visible.

"No matter how often I see it, the Mizuho Castle is huge." (Therese)

"Is it impregnable?"

"There are no castles and mansion that won't fall, but if it's about taking it, there will be many victims." (Therese)

Even if one attacks with a military force several times that of the defending side, very great losses will occur while taking this castle.

"Substantial victims might have appeared in the past."

"No, there's no one who was able to attack this Mizuho Castle." (Teruaki)

"Eh?"

"Given that it's a country that will be ruined if it's invaded, the Mizuho army always intercepted the enemy at the territory's border." (Teruaki)

They intercepted large armies with few after crossing the mountains. There were many casualties as well, but since the empire's armies suffered crushing defeats, the majority of them ran away. It seems they worked hard at pillaging the surrounding areas while chasing after them. It was apparently for the sake of compensating the losses because there were many victims.

"The empire's armies would have plundered us too if they won. The empire which attacked first and then lost, was at fault. With the empire's army close to surrendering once we fought, they suffered pillaging while being chased. There would probably be no complaints if it was only the goods of the imperial army, but for the nobles, who were in vicinity of Earl Mizuho Country, it was something they couldn't endure."

Since Earl Mizuho Country is a gentle partner who usually even trades with them, something like pillaging wouldn't have been done by them if the central's

imperial army didn't attack.

It seems there was thunderous criticism each time a campaign happened.

"It appears there was even one time a situation where they invaded at the same time from various places by forcibly making the surrounding lords mobilize."

In the end Earl Mizuho Country's army suffered the heavy loss of losing half of its mobilized war potential, but the imperial army apparently lost more than eight times in soldiers.

"There were also places in the adjoining territories which had their feudal armies annihilated. Duke Philip household sent soldiers as well and the feudal lord at that time recorded in his diary that two thirds didn't come back."
(Therese)

"Isn't that a crushing defeat?" (Erwin)

"No matter how thee gloss it over, it was a crushing defeat as thee say, Erwin." (Therese)

It appears it was an old disaster for Duke Philip household's feudal army which was solely responsible for the the northern place of attack.

"That's why they don't expand their territory. They won't come out from the Great Basin Akitsu. Such being the reason, Earl Mizuho Country followed the path of becoming a protectorate." (Therese)

Once Therese's explanation ends, the carriage arrives at the entrance to the outer garden of Mizuho Castle.

Thanks to Muraki-san who is guiding us, we cross the three-layered moat unchecked and arrive at the inner citadel located at the castle tower.

When we get off the carriage, an elderly man wearing a samurai attire appears. He appears to be a senior retainer who's more important than Muraki-san.

"I'm called Ienori Kira Mizuho. I shall guide you to lord-sama." (Ienori)

As should be expected of Therese, huh?

It looks like we can meet the feudal lord due to her being well-known.

"Mizuho? Are you that gentleman's relative?"

“From a branch family though.” (Ienori)

The people of Earl Mizuho Country all have surnames, even the commoners. And people who have a Mizuho attached after the Kira like Ienori-san, are from a branch family or those who were awarded an honourous surname by the Mizuho household since they had remarkable achievements.

“(Honestly, it’s like the Edo or the Warring States period...)” (Wendelin)

It resembles such stories like being given the surname of Matsudaira* or Toyotomi* for achieving meritorious deeds quite well. *(T/N: Matsudaira was a small powerful clan in the Muromachi period (1333-1537), Toyotomi is a name bestowed by the Japanese emperor to Toyotomi Hideyoshi who was the second of the three unifiers of Japan as general and politician)*

“Let me lead you to lord-sama’s place.” (Ienori)

We enter the castle under Ienori-san’s guidance, but the interior was tatami-matted with a strict prohibition to wear shoes after all. After seeing tatami for the first time in a long while, it has a nostalgic aura.

“Cloth boots?”

Given that everyone was barefoot after taking off their shoes and boots, Ienori-san lent us tabi, but it seems everyone feels uncomfortable wearing tabi for the first time.

“However, it can’t prevent getting mouldy.” (Burkhart)

“Burkhart-san, is your prevention against yeast infection on your feet alright?” (Wendelin)

“Earl-sama, I don’t have any yeast infection on my feet.” (Burkhart)

Burkhart-san particularly stressed the matter of him not having a yeast infection on his feet.

“You can say it’s an occupational disease of adventurers and soldiers. The inside of the boots moulds due to moving and marching for long periods. Let’s try buying this before returning home.” (Armstrong)

Doushi didn’t deny the fact of him having athlete’s feet.

“Was the floor spread knit with grass? It’s unusual.” (Katharina)

Katharina gazed at the tatami looking very interested while walking on top of it.

“There’s a door which opens if shifted to the side.” (Luise)

“Curtains which put paper in wooden frames? Really strange.” (Ina)

“What a peculiar vase.” (Wilma)

Showing astounded expressions, Luise looks at a fusuma*, Ina at a shoji* and Wilma gazes at a decorated flower arrangement. *(T/N: fusuma is a Japanese sliding door and shoji is a paper sliding door)*

They seem to be very deeply interested in things they haven’t ever seen until now such as transoms, tokonoma’s* and the hanging scrolls and earthenware displayed there. *(T/N: tokonoma is an alcove where art or such is displayed)*

“We are probably the first who entered Earl Mizuho Country as people of Helmut Kingdom.”

It’s as Doushi says. The people of Helmut Kingdom had been prohibited to leave Bardiche.

There might also be people who have violated this among them, but they shouldn’t have been able to enter Earl Mizuho Country that easily since it’s treated as yet another country.

“It wasn’t even noted down in the traveler’s journal records written by my master.” (Burkhart)

There is little to no description about Earl Mizuho Country by Margrave Breithilde.

He only wrote about his impressions of the Mizuho-styled buildings he noticed in Bardiche.

“This way, please.” (Inori)

The audience room is located at the top floor of the castle tower. Once we enter inside guided by Inori-san, High Earl Mizuho sat in a tatami-matted chief seat completely like it could be seen in historical plays.

His age is around fifty years, I guess.

His stance is that of being in proper seiza. He is a man that gives the feeling that he's really capable.

Expensive-looking vases and hanging scrolls, which looked like landscape pictures drawn with octopus ink, were displayed in a tokonoma behind him. There's even a page who looks after the lord's katana. It's completely like a historical drama.

His appearance is exactly that of a Japanese daimyo.

What's different in the showy visible impression is probably the point that no one has fastened their hair in a topknot.

"It's been a while, Duchess Philip-dono." (Mizuho)

"Around one year, I suppose? We met at the time when I was summoned to Bardiche, I guess?" (Therese)

"It feels like that's about right. It was a misfortune that the coup d'etat happened at the time of your duty in the imperial capital. There's no such obligation in our Earl Country though." (Mizuho)

The three lowest among the seven Dukes have the duty to be stationed in Bardiche to support the emperor. It seems the coup d'etat and the late emperor's demise ended up occurring at the time when Therese was on duty. But then again, since there was His Majesty's funeral service, all of the prince-elector lords were stationed in the imperial capital.

"That's very enviable. Someone like me has escaped barely alive and exposed this kind of disgraceful conduct." (Therese)

"I suppose it's a success with just you being able to run away. Oops, I'd like you to introduce the guests next to you." (Mizuho)

"They are my benefactors." (Therese)

Being introduced to High Earl Mizuho by Therese, High Earl Mizuho introduces himself next as well.

"I'm High Earl Mizuho, Toyomune Mizuho. You are Helmut Kingdom's Ultimate Weapon-dono and Dragon Slayer-dono, right? Indeed, Duchess Philip's luck seems to be great." (Toyomune)

"Otherwise an escape would have been difficult. And, well..." (Therese)

“If it’s soldiers, I will dispatch them.” (Toyomune)

“That’s a quick answer.” (Therese)

It’s the first expedition of Earl Mizuho Country’s army which has never experienced a foreign campaign until now.

Therese, who assumed they would need time to consider it, was surprised by the swift decision of High Earl Mizuho.

“It’s because that Duke Nürnberg seems to detest our country.” (Toyomune)

Earl Mizuho Country runs counter to a single powerful empire. If he, who is also a patriot, is allowed to speak out, his view is that it’s only natural to destroy Earl Mizuho Country which badly damaged the imperial army until now.

“He is probably thinking that crushing this place is connected to the future of the empire, no matter how much sacrifices it will produce.” (Toyomune)

To begin with, Mizuho’s funds and people are receiving quite the damage by his patriotic political measures in Nürnberg Dukedom.

Even though they are already antagonized in peaceful times, it will likely be like that all the more in times of war.

“All the assets of Earl Mizuho Country, which are inside Nürnberg Dukedom, have been confiscated. Almost all of the people of Mizuho have been arrested and even women and children have apparently been sent to detention facilities.” (Toyomune)

“It’s a thorough enforcement.” (Therese)

“Here’s the latest report by the swallow mail. The same situation occurs in the empire.”

In addition, the assets and people of the Lan tribe, which is the major ethnic group of Philip Dukedom, are suffering the same damages. It seems to also apply for other minorities.

“It’s gotten out of order.” (Wendelin)

“For that man it’s justice, Earl Baumeister.” (Toyomune)

However, well, I think that the empire also did well at keeping such dangerous man as the Duke at bay.

I wonder whether it wasn't possible to disinherit him somehow?

"That man intends to overrun our Philip Dukedom, too. Rather than crushing each by their own, it will be better for him if we join forces from the beginning."
(Therese)

"I guess so. However, does that man really understand?" (Toyomune)

"About what?"

"A single strong empire is absurd." (Toyomune)

The people who are in the vicinity of the imperial capital Bardiche, are conveniently calling themselves Urquhart people, but considering the details, they were an assembly of a great number of ethnic groups. As there isn't overly much difference between them since their language and religion is identical, they simply called themselves Urquhart people on their own accord in order for the empire to show its sense of unity.

"That's why they targeted the Mizuho people with their black hair and the Lan tribe with its different skin colour."

Once they are destroyed completely, the confiscated gains from there will be distributed to the self-proclaimed Urquhart people. Once that happens, they should be able to expect the loyalty of the neutral groups as well.

"(A pure ultranationalist, or rather...)" (Wendelin)

No matter how I think about it, he was a person I want to avoid forming friendly ties with.

"I shall hasten the preparation of the soldiers." (Toyomune)

"I will have the Philip Dukedom and the northern lords mobilize, too."
(Therese)

At the same time she will call out to the eastern and western lords, she explained to High Earl Mizuho.

"Even if it's a lost case, we can expect for a few to participate." (Therese)

It's not like everybody should approve of the radical Duke Nürnberg.

“Both parties are getting their armies ready to kill each other and the surviving side will take the victory, huh? That’s easy to understand. So, what will thee do, Doushi-dono and Earl Baumeister-dono?” (Therese)

Given that we are in front of High Earl Mizuho, Therese called me Earl Baumeister for a change.

“Let’s see. We have already embarked, thus treat us as mercenaries, please.” (Wendelin)

It’s also fine to make plans for returning back to Helmut Kingdom just like that, but difficulties have to be expected on the land and sea routes. There’s something annoying, too.

It’s the existence of Duke Nürnberg’s operating magic tool, which obstructs movement and communication magic, in Bardiche.

As it seems to have the power for working at quite the vast range, victims should have appeared even in Helmut Kingdom by now.

If we tried to forcibly return at this point, it would make no sense if it was in a state of being unable to use communication and movement magic until our territory.

If the magic airships don’t work in the Savage Lands, it will be a big hindrance in the development.

In that case it won’t do unless we destroy this magic tool to smithereens.

Even if Therese’s group wins against Duke Nürnberg, there’s no point if the tool remains on Holy Empire Urquhart’s side.

“(Dear, are you aiming for the destruction of that magic tool after all?)” (Elise)

“(I can’t keep secrets from you, Elise) The reward will be piecework payment of items that can be taken with us.” (Wendelin)

After a short exchange by whispering with Elise, we announce our participation as mercenaries.

I decide to not mention anything about the destruction of the aforementioned magic tool.

Since they might scheme to try keeping it if we talked about it unskillfully, I decided to destroy it by taking advantage of the military operation in the end.

“(It’s fine like that.)” (Burkhart)

“(I agree as well.)” (Armstrong)

Burkhart-san and Doushi seem to share the same opinion.

I have expected those two to realize it.

Yielding such dangerous magic tool to a hypothetical enemy is something risky. They should understand that better than anyone else.

“It’s the participation of influential war potential, isn’t it? That helps us, doesn’t it, Duchess Philip.” (Toyomune)

“However, the condition of the reward is quite vague. Isn’t there something more specific?” (Therese)

“It’s something to actually work for, right? Watching their activities, you shall grant them an appropriate reward, Therese-dono. It’s a necessary ability for the next emperor candidate.” (Toyomune)

Even we, seeing that we are proceeding towards fighting ourselves, have no intention to lose.

Naturally we will aim for victory, but how much of a reward will Therese hand out for the distinguished war service we obtained.

This will not only be circulated to the nobles of her own country but also to Helmut Kingdom, too.

If it’s too little and stingy, she will be ridiculed by the neighbouring country and the nobles of her own country will be disappointed in their new empress as well.

It was a difficult homework requiring a certain level of backbone.

“The next emperor of... I have the resolution for that.” (Therese)

The survival of the prince-electors, who stayed in the imperial capital at that time, and Urquhart the 17th, who was just enthroned, is unknown.

There was the possibility that they have been confined while being alive, but it will probably be wrong if we don’t operate here with the assumption that they were killed.

“You have the misfortune of becoming the first empress due to a disastrous reason, Therese-dono. As for the participation of Earl Baumeister’s group in the war, the conditions will become a bit better, won’t they? Let’s gather the soldiers at once. There’s also a reason to dispatch the soldiers. That man has

turned his hands on our fellow brethren who aren't soldiers." (Toyomune)

He's likely talking about the seizure of property from the Mizuho funds, which has been carried out in the south and its capital city, as well as the deportation of the people of Mizuho to detention facilities.

"Well then, we will ((head out)) at this point." (Therese)

"I understand your feelings, but assembling an army will take time anyway. Take it easy and stay at least for one night as well, Duchess Philip. If you cross the northern mountain road, you will immediately arrive in the Philip Dukedom after all." (Toyomune)

"That's right, isn't it? I will also be troubled if you were to collapse at this point, Therese-dono." (Wendelin)

"See, even Earl Baumeister-dono says so." (Toyomune)

"Understood. I shall have you let me rest without reservation." (Therese)

But then again I simply told them a reason that seems authentic. My objective is only one.

I want to go sightseeing in Earl Mizuho Country.

There should be a lot of things I can't overlook. especially on the side of foodstuff.

"As a matter of fact, there's one reward I'd like you to promise me, but..." (Wendelin)

Since Duchess Philip and High Earl Mizuho accepted my condition right away, I decided to enjoy the Earl Mizuho Country sightseeing without any misgivings.

Interlude 24 – Concerning a certain custom of nobles

– Arthur PoV –

“Hello, I’m glad to meet you. I’m Arthur von Benno Baumeister.” (Arthur)

“It is I who should be glad to meet you. I’m Amadeus Freitag von Breithilde.”
(Breithilde)

Once I recall it, it was a weird greeting.

Though I’m currently retired, I served as family head of the Knight Baumeister household for more than 30 years, but it’s the first time I have met with Margrave Breithilde who is our patron.

Usually that’s highly improbable, but the Great League Mountain Range between the previous Knight Baumeister territory and Breithilde Margraviate made that a reality.

Now that I remember, it was the previous Margrave Breithilde whom I greeted while on the way to the capital to appear at the peerage succession ceremony after the sudden death of my father.

Accompanying the merchant group on their return to Breitburg, I greeted the predecessor together with Klaus who was at that time as young as I was and familiar with crossing the mountains. The former Margrave Breithilde had us lodge in his mansion until our departure with the magic airship’s flight towards the capital.

The fare for two people for the round trip with the magic airship and the inn costs in the capital were a little expensive.

In reality I wanted to go by myself, but even as a poor Knight I was hesitating to go to the capital alone and thus the expenses got costly.

Nevertheless, since father died from sickness previously, I had to take the peerage succession ceremony as soon as possible.

Klaus, who shouldered the heavy-looking box with the armour and sword inside, looked apologetic for me having to be in charge of all our expenses. Usually it’s very unlikely for an attendant to worry about such matters.

That means that we were poor to such a degree.

However, it’s also a fact that I got angry at Klaus for apparently taking me for a

fool, once I saw that look from him while instinctively thinking that we don't suit each other.

Klaus is excellent, but he was unable to cooperate with me.

This might have been the time when I realized it the strongest for the first time. Even the chief retainers of the Margrave Breithilde household faced me with a look as if I was an idiot.

If one says that it can't be helped, then that's all there is to it, but it was something that made me feel offended after all.

However, that abominable lot was killed in action in the Demon Forest alongside the previous Margrave Breithilde.

It was a heavy blow for us as well, but it might be the truth that I felt gratified about just that one thing.

“Unable to restrain his foolish, rampaging heir, he is an incompetent family predecessor.”

“Err, well... I guess it would have resulted in a similar outcome even for me at that site... Unless it's Wendelin-san.”

The current generation's Margrave Breithilde doesn't seem to be an arrogant person to the degree of his predecessor even though he is young. It's because he's at least paying attention to such an incompetent, retired old geezer.

“It's unnecessary for you to be considerate. I wasn't able to make the decision for Wendelin to succeed. That's why I'm an incompetent, former family head.”
(Arthur)

“If you had done that, I have a feeling that there would have been a lot of opposition, but...”

“The other elder brothers. If possible, Erich? If I made that guy succeed, he might have used Wendelin skilfully. But let's stop the idle complaints.”

“I guess so.”

I cease talking about the already impossible choices and possibilities. As a matter of fact, the reason why I was summoned by Margrave Breithilde is because it's wrong as Wendelin's father if I don't decide something important. If it was until now, it would have been impossible to arrive in Breitburg within

merely a day even if I was suddenly summoned by Margrave Breithilde.

But nowadays I can arrive immediately if I board the magic airships which are regularly coming to Paul's new territory where I migrated to.

The necessity to cross the Great League Mountain Range, while being ready for the danger of mountain sickness and attacks by wyverns and wild animals, disappeared.

Even the development of the territory is advancing well thanks to Wendelin's magic.

Paul has formed a retainer group by calling his former guard colleagues and their acquaintances. Accepting the fief's residents who couldn't stay in Knight Baumeister territory due to their involvement in the incident with Kurt, the population is exceeding 200 people nowadays.

You might call that an astounding speed considering it's been only two months since Kurt's death.

"The issue is about the 『arranged woman』, isn't it?"

"Well, that's how it is."

You can't call that an overly great custom, but before the heir of a noble or such marries, an 『arranged woman』 teaches them about women.

Since it would be a disaster if the heir couldn't make children as result of ending up failing due to not being taught, royalty, nobles, merchants and wealthy farmers allocate such a woman to their heirs.

Mostly such women are only allocated to the succeeding eldest son, but there are also households which assign one to their second and third sons if they have economical leeway.

You might say it's being handled case-by-case.

However, the selection conditions are severe.

Even for Margrave Breithilde, with whom I'm consulting, in front of me, it's a problem to the extent of him being lost in thoughts.

First of, a prostitute is no good.

That's because there's the issue of illnesses.

Since there are also women who have problematic characters, there was even the possibility of them using it as material for extortion at worst or announcing their relationship to society on large scale.

Next, women with loose tongues or women with strong desires, even if they are respectable, are useless.

It will be known and become a rumour inside the territory anyway, but since she won't be a formal mistress, it will be painful to watch if she clashes with the married wives later on.

If the man's side tries to push her into the position of mistress due to being strangely pleased with her as she was his first woman, it would be a cause for a quarrel due to the inner ranking hierarchy getting disturbed.

The cases where the woman herself harboured ambitions and deceived the man weren't few by no means.

"Aren't there widows or such among the fief's population?"

"There are, but they are the wives of dependants who were involved in that incident."

Given that they are former wives of the accomplices of Kurt who tried to assassinate Wendelin, there was definitely no way that we could allocate one of them to him.

"I'm taking part in the consultation since I'm a man, but referring one with my household is harsh."

If it was the heir of the old Knight Baumeister territory, Margrave Breithilde could have recommended one right away.

However, once one considers the influence of the current Wendelin, introducing an 『arranged woman』 unskillfully will cause criticism towards Margrave Breithilde if that woman does something unnecessary.

He also doesn't want to take too much risk, I guess.

Having said that, it's not like I can be relied on in this matter either.

That's because the current me is a simple, retired geezer.

"It won't work with passing a book or such?"

Given that it's not possible to allocate an 『arranged woman』 to all children, most of those below second son take lessons by reading such books.

Even the women who will become wives study by being shown such books by their mothers before their marriages.

"Though I feel ashamed to talk about something very private, how was it in

your case, Arthur-san?”

“There was no special『arranged woman』.”

In my early days the women originating from southern territories had uninhibited natures.

Albeit being married women, they had affairs without batting an eyelid.

Moreover, as it was naturally impolite to refuse the invitation from a woman, I kept quite a few of them company.

But then, once the priest Meister-dono learned of it, that custom died out right away.

The me in those days, well, had his youthful indiscretions, I guess?

『What a slovenly custom! Can you boldly talk about such deeds to god?』
(Meister)

Meister-dono, who was an old person since those days, was usually gentle, but just at this time he got angry like a raging fire to the degree of scaring the villagers.

That fellow Klaus apparently looked at me with blaming eyes, but at that time I thought that I wanted him to switch with me in that case.

In spite of knowing how much the people are striving towards harmony within the territory, he was a truly detestable guy.

“For me it was the usual way.”

With his elder brother, who was the heir, having a weak constitution, it seems that such women were allocated to him who was treated as a spare.

“It was the daughter of a certain retainer in a humble position. She was a widow after having lost her husband in the early days.”

Naturally women, who are experienced, are chosen because they teach about that kind of thing.

Furthermore, given that the story will get complicated if there's a husband, it's always a widow.

“Finishing the relationship at the time of my marriage, it came to an end with me paying something like a fee for troubling her.”

It seems that that woman has now become the second wife of a certain elder

retainer.

Of course she is staying silent as she had been given detailed instructions together with that retainer.

I was envious of Margrave Breithilde due to the fact of making her seal her mouth.

“How about Kurt-san?”

“We didn’t have such leeway...”

Since it was a confined, isolated territory, it’s easy to cause a problem if one allocated such a woman.

Therefore we had him make do by handing a book to him.

Now that I think about it, that part might also be included in the cause for Kurt becoming odd.

He might have asked himself, even though I’m the heir of a noble’s household, why is the treatment of heirs in other households different?

By no means do I believe that, but there is the bitterness that I can’t declare that this isn’t the reason with 100% probability.

“It’s a matter I’d like you to prepare by yourself, Arthur-san. But...”

“You want me to avoid the surroundings of the Earl Baumeister household...”

Since there’s a large quantity of fresh retainers in the rising Earl household, it’s possible that I will create troubles if I decide from the side.

If it’s a woman linked awkwardly to some noble household, it’s very likely that they will meddle in the affairs over there as a partner of the rising Earl Baumeister household.

Given that the formation of the retainer group hasn’t finished, it’s possible that they will rise to chief retainer with that as the reason.

With her becoming the favourite mistress and giving birth to a child, they will wield their influence as maternal relatives and try to push for that child to become the heir.

It’s a common story, but we should probably avoid that kind of danger.

“It’s troublesome, isn’t it...?”

“Yes...”

I wondered whether it would be fine to use the wives of the accomplices of the other day, charging it with the meaning of it being like a punishment, but once I considered it prudently, their age wasn't a good match.

Since that lot was in the same generation as Kurt, even if they were young, all their wives are older than 30 years.

Although saying that is impolite, there's no meaning if Wendelin loses his interest in women due to having forced a woman well past her prime with an age above 30 onto him.

"Wendelin-san is still 15 years old."

There's no point unless we allocate an『arranged woman』 that is at the most in her twenties and has quite the beauty.

I end up believing that it's really an annoying custom.

"With the connections of our Burkhart... Let's stop right there..."

"That employed magician-dono?"

"Since he is an extreme advocate of staying unmarried, he might be unable to introduce anyone but prostitutes, but..."

Certainly, I also think that it's better to have stopped there.

"From among the fief's population...?"

Be that as it may, as Hermann has already become the family head, I can't use my influence in the Knight Baumeister territory.

That domain already belongs to Hermann.

"I just came up with it now, but how about that lady?"

Margrave Breithilde-dono raised the name of a certain person.

Certainly, if it's that person, she fits the criteria perfectly.

However, the problem is whether the person herself will accept that.

That's because it's just after such an incident happened.

"How about trying to ask the person herself? You might say『Giving birth is easier than being anxious』?"

"That's true."

In the end we arrived at the conclusion that we would hand him a book if she

was no good. I returned to Paul's territory after buying souvenirs and such for the family in Breitburg.



"You mean me?"

"I do believe it's wrong to request such a thing from you at this time, but..."



Returning to Paul's territory, I secretly called that person to a place with no human presences after handing over the souvenirs to my wife and grandchildren.

My wife had a disgusted expression at that time.

Since I didn't bring along Leila at the time of moving here after my retirement, it seems she's thinking that I'm making a move on her this time.

Certainly, I don't hate women, but I still believe to know right from wrong at such parts.

I think there would be side benefits in Leila's case as well, but I decided to judge calmly for the sake of a stable rule of the Knight Baumeister territory.

I have no doubt that Leila considered it in such manner as well.

Although she properly gave birth to sons who would become Klaus' heirs, that was just a job for her.

Actually at that time she didn't express any kind of dissatisfaction even when she was unable to live in the main house.

It might have been just fine for her to meet only for the sake of having children. Even so, she did her job sufficiently.

Even if she didn't follow the retired me, I had no particular complaints.

The matter of Leila is set with that.

The problem is my wife.

I don't want to make her worry unnecessarily as an old geezer who is past the half of his fifties.

The current me teaches my grandchildren archery and swordsmanship, helps in the development in my free time, and secures food by hunting and gathering.

I also took lessons in kanji and calculation in 50 exercises.

My wife had the role of teacher, but now that I consider it, it seems it would have also been great if I had given such a task to her.

At my time as feudal lord I always didn't notice it with all my might.

Also, there might have been resistance by the conservative residents in the Knight Baumeister household at that time, I guess?

Now that kind of group has been intentionally retired by Hermann and they have lost their influence.

Paul is always lacking manpower as he only just began development.

Therefore it wouldn't be seen as too much of a problem even if women such as wives helped with the paperwork.

This is also because of the changing times, isn't it?

Returning to the story; it will be wrong for me as father if I don't allocate an『arranged woman』to Wendelin who became Earl Baumeister.

Moreover, it's necessary to carry it out secretly so that my wife and the other women don't get aware of it too much.

I can't hide it anyway, but since it will be weird to request it too boldly, I end up calling the candidate in such secretive manner.

If it's a major noble, they can probably have a retainer, they can trust, do it arbitrarily, but unfortunately that was impossible for our current family.

“I think it's inexcusable to request such thing even though you just lost your husband, but...”

The one I asked to become Wendelin's『arranged woman』was Amelie, the wife of Kurt who self-destructed.

She fits the criteria quite well.

First off, she is an experienced person since she has two children as the former wife of Kurt.

As a widow there is no husband who will kick up a fuss. She is the wife of Kurt who is the principal offender in the attempted assassination case, but different from the wives of the other accomplices, she is a noble.

Even if the surroundings learned of it, it would be advantageous as people would accept it in the manner of her atoning towards Wendelin instead of her husband who died.

With her age of 27 years she doesn't look like a woman beyond her prime because of her looking young due to her childish face.

She isn't that much of a beauty, but Wendelin is on good terms with cute types as well.

Since she's also a person who often reads books, her hobby matches with Wendelin, too.

I believe her to be the best option.

"Yes, I will do it."

Unexpectedly she accepted my request readily.

Once she reassures me, she begins to talk about her reason.

"Although I feel sorry towards you, father-in-law-sama, it's naturally in my own interest."

"That's justified."

For her there are the two sons which were left behind from her time with Kurt.

With them being Wendelin's nephews, it was planned to have them succeed the surname Meinbach, which is her parent's home, and distribute territory to them once they become adults.

However, when I was asked whether that promise would be definitely kept, even I couldn't nod right away.

I believe that the wives of Wendelin will increase from now on.

No matter how much that guy refuses, it's absolutely impossible for it to be zero.

The reason is that he's a part of noble's society.

Of course plenty of children will be born, I guess.

And they will create branch families according to the social positions of the wives and the territory, which has still a lot of undeveloped areas, should be distributed to them.

What if the territory allocated to his nephews was disappointing as a result of Wendelin giving priority to his own children?

It's a cruel story, but it would probably be pointless even if they complained to Wendelin who has become a major noble at that point in time.

That's why she wants to definitely secure the future of her grandchildren by offering her own body.

Beyond Wendelin having his social position to consider, the probability of him not taking the wish of a woman, who had that kind of relationship with him, into consideration is low.

If you call that selfishness, it's just that, but it also means that she was affectionate as mother.

“Sorry. I’m burdening you with hardships.”

With her just having married into our family, it’s nothing but troubles for her. Certainly she didn’t expect to knit ropes with straw as daughter of a noble. Our eating habits are skimpy. Even though he was my son, her husband Kurt was a hopeless man.

Even though he had already obtained it, he lost his rightful peerage and territory. He plotted an assassination against his younger brother and got killed in reverse. Even I had no way to cover up for him.

Moreover there’s also the issue of me having secretly settled the affairs after his death.

Usually that won’t turn into a problem, but since that guy did something foolish, it resulted in an excessive drop in evaluation.

“I don’t know when Wendelin-sama will be able to come to you, but...”

It’s probably no good unless he coordinates his schedule with me.

I can’t openly tell my wife too much either. It’s necessary to inform Paul, but I don’t want to tell his wife in the beginning as much as possible either.

It will leak out if they do it for a while anyway, but at the beginning it’s likely better to keep the uproar low.

“Just make sure to brace yourself please.”

“Understood.”

Once I told that to my non-consanguineous daughter, I began the preparations in a hurry.



– **Wendelin PoV** –

『That’s how it is.』

“Haa...”

When I was working hard at public work today just like the other recent days, the calling alarm of my magic hand-held communication device suddenly rang.

Once I take it out in a hurry, it appears to be a private and absolutely important matter from father.

However, I had no idea about that important matter or whatever.

Father has already retired and is helping in the development of Paul-nii-san's territory.

I didn't hand over magic hand-held communication devices to anyone but a select few, but father didn't actually get one.

Given that I have handed Paul-nii-san one, he probably has borrowed that one and is contacting me with it.

In that case, does that mean that it's a matter Paul-nii-san is aware of as well?

Once I ask about the concrete details of that important matter, he wants to have a talk after meeting directly.

"Elise, tonight I may not return to the mansion." (Wendelin)

『Got it.』 (Elise)

Thinking that it would be wrong if I didn't hear him out, I finish the public works and leap to Paul-nii-san's territory with magic after contacting Elise with my magic hand-held communication device.

Paul-nii-san's territory is still in the middle of development, but the territory's people are brimming with energy.

Forming a retainer group consisting of people he got to know as a guard, the retainers brought along slum dwellers, whom they got to know during patrols and supervision, and had them cultivate agricultural land.

Continuing with the maintenance of houses and roads, the construction of Paul-nii-san's residence in the heart of the territory is advancing at a quick pace.

Currently he is carrying out the governmental affairs and such in an old house which had been relocated by Baron Rembrandt. Once I showed up there, father and Paul-nii-san awaited me.

"I'm glad you came." (Arthur)

"Umm... what kind of business do you have with me?" (Wendelin)

"Err, that is... Paul." (Arthur)

"Haa... Since we don't need tea, leave the room. Make sure that no one is eavesdropping outside the door. You guys do understand what happens if it

gets leaked, right?” (Paul)

Paul-nii-san sent the servants out of the study, and ordered them to stand watch so that no one eavesdrops at the entrance.
It seems to be quite the important talk.

“Will it become a disaster if revealed to the outside?” (Wendelin)

“That’s right. It’s better if there’s only few people who know about it.”
(Arthur)

As father’s expression is serious, it seems to be quite the crucial talk.

“So, what’s it about?” (Wendelin)

“Wendelin, you became an upper noble. In addition, you are an Earl-sama possessing a vast territory.” (Arthur)

“Haa.” (Wendelin)

“Once you become an upper noble, there are especially important matters. Do you understand?” (Arthur)

“Is it about governing the territory smoothly?” (Wendelin)

“That’s of course important, too. However, before that it’s necessary to have the household continue into the next generation and those afterwards by making children.” (Arthur)

“I have Elise and the others though.” (Wendelin)

Hearing father’s statement, I end up wondering whether he is trying to push a concubine onto me.

“No, it looks like I gave you a misunderstanding. It’s not a talk about concubines or such. It’s for the sake of you being able to safely make children once you marry...” (Arthur)

Once I tilt my head to the side because father’s speech isn’t to the point in any way, Paul-nii-san, who watches from the side, assists by throwing a lifeline.

“Simply put, Wend, you are unskillful as you are still a virgin. That’s what it’s about.” (Paul)

“Are you telling me to go buy a woman?” (Wendelin)

I'm against buying a woman just because I'm told to do so by my father and elder brother. Burkhart-san and Erw aren't here either. It was something complicated for the current me.

Besides, this body is a virgin, but it's not like I have zero experience, though I can't say it was a great number, from my previous life.

I consider it to be unnecessary worrying, but since there's no way that I can inform them of that, I end up being lost in thought how to refuse it.

"As expected, even I know that I can't advise an Earl-sama to buy a woman."
(Arthur)

"Then, how about learning it from a book?" (Wendelin)

Which reminds me, there were such books in the library of my parent's home. They were hidden horizontally in the inner part of the bookshelves so that their covers couldn't be seen, but I remember that I didn't feel like reading them much due to their questionable illustrations, going by my taste. That was the moment I was once again made to realize that Japan is the best in that kind of field.

"No, there are『arranged women』for such times." (Arthur)

It's only vaguely, but I can imagine the general meaning of the word. In short, it's likely about getting experience by associating with such woman before the marriage.

"It's a word I have heard for the first time." (Wendelin)

"That's because we were the lowest rank as nobles." (Paul)

As Paul-nii-san gives an explanation, it seems to be a custom to allocate a widow or such to the heir of a noble household as『arranged women』. They have an inexperienced man associate with an experienced woman. However, it happens behind the scenes in absolute secrecy until that heir marries.

Keeping it completely secret was impossible, but they try to not reveal her existence to the wives to be married as long as possible.

You can call it something like a time-limited mistress.

"Haa, with an experienced woman, you say...?" (Wendelin)

“There are many widows, aren’t there?” (Arthur)

It will be troublesome if a husband exists. As there’s no point even if they allocate an inexperienced woman, it can be considered as natural that it resulted in widows playing the role most of the times.

“(However...)” (Wendelin)

This place isn’t Breitburg or the capital.

If the conclusion is an experienced widow, I have to take into account the possibility of an outrageous old lady appearing.

Now that I think of it, there was also a situation where I got taken along to a sex service on my way home from a drinking party with my company’s superior during my time as new employee in my previous life.

According to that certain superior, it was apparently a shop with the fame of having many beautiful mature ladies and a very good service.

It’s not like I have ED* either. When I was waiting for my female partner while being nervous as I had a normal interest, a pigmon*, which was older than my mother, appeared. *(T/N: ED = Erectile Dysfunction aka you can’t get a boner – Pigmon is an aerial monster originating from Ultraman, google it for pictures)*

How to call her!? She was clearly a trap-hole.

I got stuck hurling curses at the superior, who led me to this shop, in my heart. I tried to somehow swindle my way out of it by doing nothing, but Pigmon was very faithful to her professional duties.

In the end I finished the deed while remembering a beautiful female employee who joined the company at the same time as me, but from that time I lost my trust in anyone.

Attractive mature ladies or widows being wonderful happens only inside literary works to the bitter end.

“(Father is saying it out of kindness, I guess...)” (Wendelin)

It’s probably because a noble household’s heir, who seems to not have an『arranged woman』ends up being regarded one level lower.

To say nothing of the current me who is an Earl.

Father prepared such woman in order for me to not lose face.

I’m thankful about that, but he wouldn’t be able to get anyone but a Pigmon-like woman with a considerably high probability.

“(Will I have an erection, I wonder?) So, what kind of person is that woman?”
(Wendelin)

“She is 12 years older than you, Wendelin.” (Arthur)

It seems I was able to avoid a grandmother with the pretext of her being an attractive mature lady.

But, I wasn't able to let down my guard at all until I have seen the actual person.

“Speaking age-wise, she's around Amelie-sister-in-law-san?” (Wendelin)

“It's that Amelie.” (Arthur)

“Huh?” (Wendelin)

“The one who was most compatible with the conditions is Amelie. The person herself accepted it as well.” (Arthur)

The person who will teach me about women, is in fact the widow of my elder brother.

Even though I heard it as partial joke, I ended up lost for words on the spot after being informed that she's indeed my『arranged woman』.



“Paul-nii-san.” (Wendelin)

“Sorry! Even I can't help you in this case!” (Paul)

Once I went to father's place after being called all of a sudden, I was told that a woman will be allocated to me who will teach me about women and that this woman was my sister-in-law.

There was absolutely no way for me to consult with others about this.

Moreover, since there wasn't much time left any more until the marriage, it turned into a talk about having me keep her company from today onwards.

It's something I want to prevent somehow, but as it's impossible to discuss this with Elise, I first ask Roderich whom I have given a magic hand-held communication device.

I end up being splendidly abandoned with『The options I have in this matter are... It's completely a father's domain』.

In addition there was the follow-up『I will keep it a secret from the madams』, but for some reason I didn't want to thank him for anything.

Next I try to ask Burkhardt-san.

『The other side has prepared her for free. Be at least thankful. Well, for free also means that she's not expensive though. Don't get deceived by that widow』 he says. I completely receive advice like it's somebody else's problem. (*E/N: It is someone else's problem*)

In other words, he says 『Do it』 without caring about it overly much.

In a certain sense he seems to have something of an older, fashionable man.

『There's still someone left! For such times!』

In troubled times at the crucial moment there's Erich-nii-san.

If it's him, he might be able to come up with a move to successfully dodge the matter somehow.

Thinking so, I tried to contact him while putting my last hope on him.

『It's absolutely not allowed to refuse an arranged woman.』 (Erich)

Due to Erich-nii-san's gentle but forceful warning, I have no ways left to retreat any more.

『Although he retired, father bowed his head to Amelie-sister-in-law-san in his duty as former family head.』 (Erich)

An『arranged woman』is assumed to be a present with the highest social status which a father provides to his succeeding son before leaving the household.

Though he tries to unexpectedly do that in secret, it apparently results in such treatment since the family's head takes the responsibility for bringing someone in.

In addition, it's not something any kind of household can prepare that easily.

Not preparing such woman happens often if it's low-ranking noble family.

Merchants and similar can't prepare one unless they operate on large scale.

Using assets and connections, they allot such woman to their heirs even though it ends in a débâcle sometimes.

『It looks like he is giving her to you after choosing someone suitable, but I believe that father has struggled quite a bit in the selection of the woman.』

(Erich)

Refusing that is apparently a very rude conduct.

『Umm, Erich-nii-san, you too?』 (Wendelin)

『By father-in-law, to be honest.』 (Erich)

It appears that such a woman was allocated to him by Rüdiger-san and not father.

It seems to have been a widow through the connections of Viscount Mongérard after all, but the matter of fellow family heads secretly meeting and accommodating such wishes is also a proof that there's mutual trust between both sides.

Both will be aware of the partner for the heir to lose his virginity.

For fellow nobles you can usually say that there isn't this much mutual trust.

『Keep it a secret from Miriam.』 (Erich)

『As fellow man, that's only natural.』 (Wendelin)

She might be suspecting it vaguely, but it's wrong to voice it out.

There seems to be such a rule.

『I understand your feelings. Especially if I consider the relationship between you, Wend, and Kurt-nii-san. But, the surrounding nobles don't consider it as particularly weird.』 (Erich)

I feel an ethical problem since she's the former wife of my own elder brother, but there are no people in this world who think of it as especially odd.

I, who have the highest authority in that family, look after my sister-in-law who lost her husband.

This was something ordinary. This world isn't that easy-going.

However, it's not only receiving favours either. If she doesn't properly do what she can, she can't complain even if she's driven out after being told 『I won't support you any longer』.

『Amelie-sister-in-law-san is living in Paul-nii-san's territory, but Wend, you are supporting her a lot, aren't you?』 (Erich)

『Yes.』 (Wendelin)

I can't say how much, but it's a fact that I've been adding it to the aid for Paul-nii-san.

『The nephews will be given territory after they become adults. That's right, isn't it?』 (Erich)

『Yes.』 (Wendelin)

『Even if it's Amelie-sister-in-law-san, isn't she just worried? Such a great and selfish story, that doesn't happen in the first place.』 (Erich)

If it's another upper noble household, a person with a standing like Amelie-sister-in-law-san will apparently lead a mostly unfortunate life.

『Due to the scandal of the eldest son, the heir-ship of the main house changed to the youngest brother, but the young children of the eldest brother are still remaining. From the viewpoint of that youngest brother, the children left of the eldest brother are a nuisance, right?』 (Erich)

They are existences that are a hindrance to the succession of my own children.

In the worst-case scenario they would be killed by pretending that they died in an accident or to a disease.

『For us this possibility doesn't exist, but whether the territory is safely distributed to our nephews depends on you, Wend. However, it won't particularly become any kind of problem even if you annul that agreement.』 (Erich)

In the future, at the time when I would revoke that agreement, my authority would have become overwhelmingly large.

No matter how much Amelie-sister-in-law-san might complain, no one would probably listen to her, Erich-nii-san declared.

『I am...』 (Wendelin)

『I don't think that you would do such a thing, Wend, but that's also a fact in the worst case. As for Amelie-sister-in-law-san, she'd like to have a guarantee, right?』 (Erich)

If she has that kind of relationship with me, it will result in her seizing some sort of weakness of me and she hopes that the territory will be safely given to

my nephews.

『Amelie-sister-in-law-san does it for the sake of her children. Wend, you have to think of it as her side benefit for having her teach you about women. I believe it's fine for both sides to not overthink a situation of this level.』 (Erich)

『I see...』 (Wendelin)

Once I considered Amelie-sister-in-law-san's situation as woman, at least a bit, after it turns into that kind of relationship, I was honestly depressed. That might also apply to the other side. In that case, it's fine as matching the selfishness of both sides will make it easier.

Indeed, as expected of Erich-nii-san.

He has been an ikemen since the old times, but he demonstrated his talent even as counsellor.

『Also, you don't hate her, do you, Wend?』 (Erich)

『Of course not.』 (Wendelin)

That part seems to be the truth for the entire male community.

『In that case it's okay to enjoy yourself without any reservations.』 (Erich)

『Got it. Thank you very much.』 (Wendelin)

Thinking that it's just as I would expect of Erich-nii-san, I cut off the communication, but by no means did I think that even he had such an experience.

When I was thinking『Those are the benefits of an ikemen after all, eh?』, Paul-nii-san, who listened to the communication from the side, dropped his shoulders for some reason.

“Paul-nii-san?” (Wendelin)

“I, such woman wasn't allocated to me...” (Paul)

“That's because you became a noble all of a sudden, Paul-nii-san.” (Wendelin)

“Before that. Helmut did say it, didn't he? Such a woman was mediated for him by Willem-san, he said.”

Since that household has a professional duty which can be inherited, they

must avoid the nightmare of no children being born. It seems that kind of woman was allocated to Helmut-nii-san.

“Wend, Erich and Helmut, I’m envious...” (Paul)

“Let’s switch then?” (Wendelin)

“What will you do after switching?” (Paul)

Paul-nii-san has an envious-looking expression, but as fellow man I can understand him very well.

“It’s not a situation where I can say that I’m jealous or such. However, this hut, you know? Although there’s a new building, we still can’t use it.” (Paul)

Though it’s still provisional, there’s no way that I can do such thing in the feudal lord’s mansion either.

Accordingly it seems I can borrow this hut, which was built at the edge of the territory in order to serve as rest area for those who patrol at night in the future, for a while.

“Though nothing but the minimum of items has been installed. At worst it will be alright as long as there’s a bed.”

This place has been apparently designated as location for the clandestine meetings.

Moreover, the ones knowing this information are only father, Paul-nii-san and a part of his retainers.

It will get exposed before long anyway, but currently a gag order has been imposed.

“It has already become dark. I think Amelie-sister-in-law-san will come if you wait for a bit longer. Well then, is it strange to tell you to do your best?” (Paul)

While saying that, Paul-nii-san leaves the hut.

I, who was left behind by myself, waited for her while being nervous.



– Amelie PoV –

“(With Wend-kun, is it...)” (Amelie)

My name is Amelie von Benno Baumeister.

I'm a widow who lost her husband just two months ago.

Be that as it may, my husband didn't die from disease or in an accident.

He destroyed himself by trying to kill his real younger brother who is a noble.

I will omit the detailed explanation, but thanks to that I'm the wife of an attempted assassination criminal and my children ended up becoming the children of an attempted assassination criminal.

Usually my children and me should expect to feel ashamed until we die, but luckily we are living without too much discomfort due to the assistance of my husband's younger brother-san.

The younger brother, who was about to be assassinated by the husband, supports the wife and children of an attempted assassination perpetrator.

In society he was considered a person with a large heart and a firm character.

Moreover, it seems that my children will be granted a territory in the future.

I believe that to be an unbelievable good luck, but at the same time I feel some uneasiness as well.

What if he revokes that promise in the future?

I think that the younger brother of my husband, Wendelin-kun, isn't that kind of person, but I'm also worried in some respects.

However, he really became remarkable.

The time when I met him for the first time was when I married my husband at the age of 18.

Even though he was still a small, cute child, he contributed to the dining table of his poor home by hunting and gathering with magic.

Father-in-law-sama and mother-in-law-sama stuck to not interfering in his activities due to the reason that his talent would produce strife in the territory.

Once he became 12 years old, he left outside the territory.

His expression at that time looked cheerful.

From the viewpoint of my husband, he might have recognised him as enemy who will steal his inheritance, but from his own viewpoint, that territory was nothing but a burden.

I think that's how it was.

And, within not even one year, he subjugated two dragons.

Building a steadfast position as magician, he even acquired a peerage on his

own.

It seems that made my husband's anxiety revive once again, but I believe that was correct in a certain meaning.

Leaving aside his intentions, it was very unlikely that the upper nobles of the capital wouldn't use his strength.

As feared, he returned to his parent's home. He received a request in the Demon Forest, and began the development of the Savage Lands.

The fief's population was delighted due to that accomplishment. It reached the point that they wished for him to become the new feudal lord. My husband, who was no more than a mediocre heir, was gradually driven into a corner. I considered him pitiful, but this is also the fate of a noble. There were still plenty of means for my husband to survive.

Because it was impossible to develop it anyway, he advised father-in-law-sama to distribute the Savage Lands.

In that situation there wouldn't be any worry that the Knight Baumeister household would be shut down as they would have understood and approved of the idea to entrust the development of the Savage Lands, which was the ulterior motive of the kingdom, to him. It should also have been possible to get support for the Knight Baumeister territory.

However, my husband wasn't able to choose that option.

He was the eldest son and the kingdom approved his rights over the Savage Lands.

That's why he said that he would raise our peerage by developing everything, including the Savage Lands, with his own effort.

And in addition he said that it was only natural for Wendelin-kun, who is his younger brother, to cooperate with him. The relationship between both had already become hostile.

If possible I wanted to advise him as well, but a woman advising a man in this territory would just end up being told that she has gone too far and that she's intrusive.

I couldn't do anything but take a distance from my husband who got angry while cursing at Wendelin-kun every day.

Did it also come to this because of that?

I wasn't able to consider him as enemy of my husband.

To begin with, it was my husband's side which schemed an assassination first.

"I didn't expect it to result in this..."

"It was unexpected for me as well."

When I went to the newly-built hut as told by father-in-law-sama, he waited for me there.

It hasn't been that long since I last saw him, but the fact, that he officially became an Earl, seems to be big.

It reached the point that he seems to have grown up in proportion to the increase in responsibilities.

"Umm... Amelie-sister-in-law-san is..." (Wendelin)

"Let's stop that talk. I believe we will just go around in circles." (Amelie)

Although it was legitimate self-defence, it's the story of the man who killed my husband, but as it's already a matter of the past, it's pointless just to think about it.

"Besides, that person wasn't faithful in this area."

I think that he cherished me as wife at first as newly-wed, but once I gave birth to two children, I think he gradually stopped looking at me as woman. Especially for around these last 2~3 years he was engrossed in a new lover.

"Lover? Such a story is..." (Wendelin)

It seems he heard it for the first time. He couldn't hide his surprised expression.

"There's no way that I can talk about it, right? Father-in-law-sama settled it secretly after the incident." (Amelie)

It's based on the idea of 『Nobles need several wives!』

Did he do this just because he liked the woman? Or did he really think that nobles are such people?

It was a fact that he secretly kept the daughter of a poor farmer, living inside the territory, as a mistress.

My husband intended to hide her existence, but of course father-in-law-sama exposed it.

Well, it shouldn't be possible to hide it anyway since this sort of topic will immediately become a rumour.

I was told that he apparently promised her to make her his mistress once he officially became the feudal lord.

"It's nothing bad, but..."

"Oh well..."

If that's the case, I wanted him to keep such woman with just his own resourcefulness without hiding her from us.

By the way, that woman received a certain extent of solatium and hush money after that incident, and went to marry outside the territory.

Father-in-law-sama handled it confidentially.

Given that she fortunately didn't become pregnant with his child, only that might have been the sole salvation, I think.

"Even though I have two children, I'm a bit worried because I'm not that experienced, but please take care of me for the short time we have." (Amelie)

"Haha... Please treat me well." (Wendelin)

After both of us exchanged a stiff greeting, we embraced each other and it resulted in that kind of relationship.

While having a slight feeling of guilt once I think about the fiancées of Wendelin-kun, I was actually able to feel relieved by thinking that I'm still a woman as well.

There's also the matter of my children. I wondered whether it would be fine if I enjoyed this relationship until he marries.

By the way, I feel like a slight gap appeared in my and father-in-law-sama's expectations.

He treats me strangely preciously.

"Amelie-sister-in-law-san, I'm sorry for various things." (Paul)

"Paul-sama, Your consideration is unnecessary." (Amelie)

It's around one month after I entered that kind of relationship with Wendelin-kun.

When I was cleaning the hut the next morning after the clandestine meeting,

the local feudal lord, Paul-sama, showed up by himself and called out to me. Entering the hut, where the clandestine meetings are held, has been absolutely prohibited by Paul-sama's order and it is usually locked. As the management of cleaning and such is my task, the ones who possess a key are only Paul-sama, Wendelin-sama and me. Being given a magic hand-held communication device in addition, it has taken the shape of me being contacted about the next meeting in advance by him. I think that it's an expensive magic tool for a time-limited arranged woman, but I'm told that there's no problem as it's planned to give this to my children in the future.

"I'm enjoying myself quite a bit." (Amelie)

"Although he was mediocre, he earnestly listened to the things said by father. I had such kind of impression about Kurt-aniki, but well..."

Paul-sama also didn't expect that my husband neglected me and took another young woman as lover.

"That's why I'm glad that I can actually feel as woman after a long time."

"I guess it's fine if you say so, Amelie-sister-in-law-san? But, this hut is amazing..."

At first it didn't have anything but a bed, but nowadays it became quite luxurious.

『Let's replace the bed. Also the cushions, bed sheet and pillows. Those are the most important items.』

Even though Wendelin-kun is young, he doesn't make a move on his fiancées until they held the ceremony, even if there are several of them.

Having said that, he has a social standing where it's wrong for him to go to that kind of stores.

As result of that, he comes to me quite often. Once it turned out like that, he has begun to add equipment and furniture inside the hut one after the other as he seems unhappy with its state.

『That's an expensive-looking bed.』

『Please don't mind since it's a gift.』

『A gift, eh...?』

Such extravagant bed.

I never saw one like that.

It's a high-class item at a level that the Baumeister household and my parent's home can't buy it in the first place.

As even the bedding such as the cushion and the sheet are all top quality products, I have to take the washing into consideration as well.

『The room is lonesome.』

Next, such things as carpets, wallpapers and curtains were added. Different from its outward appearance, the hut's interior continued to become luxurious.

『Amelie-sister-in-law-san, this hut has more or less a bathroom.』

『Drawing water is troublesome though.』

『The bathtub is narrow and dirty...』

Having changed the bathtub, which has been provided, with a new, big item, matching tiles are laid out in addition.

『As expected, the interior design of the bathroom is, well... We can at least hang up wall papers though.』

Whereupon Wendelin-sama brought a craftsman to work on the interior of the bathroom, and while at it, the toilet from the capital with magic.

『How many days will it take?』

『With this size it will be done in two days.』

『Please work stealthily inside the hut after I pick you up in the morning and send you home to the capital in the evening. Your daily wages will be ten times that of the normal market price.』

『Okay. I will show you by completing it beautifully.』

Since he is able to free move with magic, he called a craftsman from the capital and had him remodel the bathroom and toilet.

『Umm, Wendelin-sama?』

『It will be alright if it's this craftsman-san. He is that kind of craftsman-san

after all.』

In exchange for nobles and rich people contracting him at high price for remodelling the houses of mistresses whose existence they rather don't want their family to know about, he protects the secrets by keeping his lips sealed. It seems he is that kind of craftsman.

“Therefore, this hut, isn't the interior design wonderful? I feel like the interior is more luxurious than that of our newly built mansion.”

Paul-sama's expression had a slight cramp due to the interior design of the hut which was remodelled after fully relying on the assets of Wendelin-sama.

“It's a beautiful dresser, isn't it...?”

“Umm...”

It reached the point that Wendelin-sama often gave me presents such as accessories and dresses.

『Let's go shopping in the capital.』

『Wendelin-sama, your face is...』

『It will be fine.』

Even underwear, it would be better if I put on pretty ones. I accepted him bringing me along to the capital with magic to shop in the high-class stores of the capital.

Originally it will be hopeless to go to the capital, which I yearned for since my childhood and which I visited for the first time in my life, if I don't pay the expensive magic airship fare, but in case of Wendelin-sama we end up arriving in an instant with magic.

『Please put on this ring. It's a magic tool for disguising.』

Using the magic tool for disguising which important nobles utilize to go out incognito, I was taken to various places.

『It seems to be wrong towards Elise-sama and the others, doesn't it...?』

『It's because I'm busy with public works.』

Wendelin-sama had clandestine meetings or took me out for a date five times

in the week in the time from evening until around the time for going to bed.

『Today I told them that I will finish dinner at the construction site.』

Saying that, he took me to a fancy restaurant in the capital.

『Isn't this underwear a bit too showy?』

『Certainly not.』

I accept him buying me various things to the degree of feeling sorry towards Elise-sama and the others.

If it was a few years back, this would have been an impossible living style, but this is just a time-limited, transient dream, too.

Thinking of it as situation until Wendelin-sama marries, I surrendered myself to this happiness.

“That guy. I wonder whether he has accumulated a large amount of stress.”
(Paul)

“Maybe.” (Amelie)

At the times we are in the hut, we do such things: talking while drinking tea and eating light meals and sweets, he looks happily as I wear the clothes and underwear we bought and taking a baths together.

There were many events where he's behaving like a spoilt child completely as if I were his elders sister or rather mother.

“In his childhood he was a very mature child, but at this point his balance crumbled? However, I wonder whether it won't be exposed to his fiancées with five times a week. Ah, do all the retainers deceive them?”

“If it's Roderich-sama, will he be able to successfully deceive them?”

“That guy is excellent after all. But it helps me that Wend is coming here a lot.”

Since he accelerates the public works within the territory to a frightening speed while also using it as alibi, it was a fact that it was a great help from Paul-sama's viewpoint.

“Also, the territory, which Karl and Oscar will succeed, has already entered the foundation work phase, hasn't it?”

The territory which is scheduled to be succeeded by my children, is adjacent to this territory here.

Currently it's an uninhibited grassland, but Wendelin-sama has already started land readjustment and soil preparation with magic.

As a matter of fact, the retainers and people of my parent's Meinbach household will get involved starting from next year. The matter of starting the development has been decided.

At the same time as my oldest son, Karl, becomes an adult, the development has to be finished to a certain extent, is what Wendelin-sama forethought.

My second son, Oskar, will establish a branch family as Junior Commander.

Father-in-law-sama also promised to help as much as he can without sparing any efforts.

"Somehow I feel sorry as we seem to be using you, Amelie-sister-in-law-san. But, that guy. It looks he likes you very much, Amelie-sister-in-law-san."

"However, I'm quite happy. Because I'm wanted as woman."

"That guy, he will continue the relationship even after marrying."

"That is absolutely not allowed."

To the bitter end it's a relationship until Wendelin-sama marries. There are only unpleasant things awaiting both sides if he drags out the relationship.

"I thought that my life as woman ended with that man's death. However, for this half year I was able to return being a woman again. With these memories as source of encouragement, I will support the Knight Meinbach household from behind the scenes afterwards. If I do it skilfully, they might become at least an Associate Baron household."

"I think it's fine if you don't brood over it that much though."

"Besides, It's not good to be despised by Wendelin-sama's fiancées. A woman's intuition is sharp after all. If it's for a limited time, Elise-sama might kindly pretend to not know even if she doesn't feel pleased with it."

"To tell me such stuff is, you know... I often don't know what my wife is thinking. Moreover, I will get a concubine after a while. For me that will be a bit exhausting."

“That’s no good. Paul-sama, you are a member of the Baumeister faction which is at the peak of its popularity.”

“I’m just benefiting from my younger brother though.”

There’s still time left until Wendelin-sama’s marriage.
I have decided to try living as woman as much as I can for the time until the time limit.
Even though I think it’s sinful towards my deceased husband and my children.



– **Narrator** –

“Hm~~~~m, Amelie-sister-in-law-san is Wend’s arranged woman, eeh?”

“She isn’t a bad choice for a noble, right, Helmut-nii-san?”

Just at that time Helmut and Erich were talking about Wendelin’s arranged woman in a bar of the capital.

“Kurt-aniki’s misconduct is atoned for by his wife, huh?”

“Although it hasn’t been made official overly much, it seems that such choice happened often in the past.”

“I understand that it’s aristocratic, but how about the emotional aspect? Though it’s fine if that chap, Wend, can do it properly, I think?”

“Ah, regarding that there’s no need to worry.”

“How come, Erich?”

“She’s an arranged woman, isn’t she? It was like that for you, Helmut-nii-san, and me as well, right? It’s a secret job, but there’s the fact that she will be rewarded for it.”

“It was like that at my time, too. It’s been a widow of a noble’s retainer who works as a forest guard like me and who is a friend of my father-in-law.”

Since her husband died from a battle wound at the time of capturing poachers and because her child is still very young and can’t do official work, she became Helmut’s arranged woman under the condition that he will supplement her living expenses during that time.

Helmut heard it in such style from his father-in-law.

“It’s been for you like that as well, right, Erich?”

“It was a similar relationship in my case, too.”

There was a person who ended up dying young to diseases among the retainers of Viscount Mongérard, and thus his young widow, whom he left behind, became Erich’s partner.

Given that her child was very young after all, she was promised that he would take care of her family’s finances until that child becomes an adult.

“It’s also a kind of aid system.”

If they can protect the secret, they will be paid an according amount of money as hush money.

Since they are widows, almost 100% of them keep the promise for the sake of the children left behind.

“Saying it like this, it decreases the man’s feelings of guilt.”

“For everyone it’s something like that, I guess. In the beginning they consider it as wrong towards the married wife.”

“I certainly thought that.”

Since both of them already had fiancées, they were reminded of that first.

“Then, hearing that person’s circumstances, they end up thinking that it’s even worse to refuse it.”

“Right, right.”

If they refuse at that point, it’s because it has to do with the lives of that woman and her children.

“However, all of them are men after all. If they think that they can do that kind of thing with a woman, they are instinctively very delighted. Wend is a man, too.”

Therefore he will accept it, but it also means that there’s no man who hates that kind of thing.

“You can say that again. It was the same for me, too.”

“For me as well.”

Helmut burst into laughter due to the truth mentioned by Erich. The two continued to happily chat for quite a time while drinking sake.

Chapter 83 – Sightseeing in Earl Mizuho Country

“Speaking of which, what have you requested there all of a sudden? Though it’s great it was accepted.”

“You know, the permit doesn’t cost us anything, and there are benefits as well.” (Wendelin)



With Therese’s request for reinforcements from Earl Mizuho Country granted, we decide to leave Mizuho Castle and sightsee in Mizuho.

As it seems we have been provided a reservation in a high-class hot-spring hotel which has open air baths available at night, I look forward to this as well.

To the spa and delicious Japanese cuisine, that is.

Just how much luxury is that, I wonder?

Given that we are only staying for one night, I have to start the sightseeing and the selection of souvenirs in a hurry.

As it’s no good if I don’t eat delicious food, I don’t even have a second to lose now.

I rush to the money exchanger to change my Helmut Kingdom currency into that of Mizuho.

The copper coins are square with a round hole in them. The silver coins are oblong resembling a silver quarter ryou from the Edo period. With the gold coin being a koban* itself, ten gold coins are a large koban which is called 『Ten Ryou』 ooban. *(T/N: A ryou was a gold currency unit in pre-Meiji Japan Shakkanhou system. It was eventually replaced with a system based on the yen. The Tokugawa shogunate attempted to create a central currency, based on gold, silver and copper units all exchangeable at fixed rates. Oblong gold coins, called koban, were minted with one koban containing about one ryō of gold, so that koban carried a face value of one ryō. The official rate was set in 1609 at one ryō equal to 50 monme (approx 187 grams) of silver, or 4000 brass coins. However, in reality the relative values between gold, silver and brass currencies fluctuates almost on a daily basis throughout the Edo period. (source wiki))*

There are differences in their shape, unit system and names, but it’s not

overly complex as there's no difference in the quantity of gold, silver and copper used.

Well then, as I'm walking in the city wondering what to buy, Ina came asking about the reward some time ago.

"It won't be fulfilled if we don't win anyway. Even if we get the reward, there won't be any loss to the empire."

The condition, which I set, is a permission to have direct trade between Baumeister Earldom and Earl Mizuho Country.

As there's also the matter of distance and the number of magic airships, I will probably just come to buy things with 『Teleportation』, but it means that I'm lawfully allowed to do so.

Of course High Earl Mizuho has accepted that unconditionally.

But that's only natural as an increase in sales is a cause for celebrations after all.

"You want the products of Earl Mizuho Country that much?" (Ina)

"Yes! If possible I want to buy up all of it!" (Wendelin)

Getting all psyched up, I exchanged an amount of 100 million cents, but upon reflection I came to the conclusion that it's not good to buy up a large quantity of goods and food since we will head into battle after this.

Instead it's probably necessary keep the quantity down as much as possible while increasing the variety.

"First is the tea house I failed to visit." (Wendelin)

"You are quite fixated on that one, aren't you?" (Katharina)

"I haven't eaten anything since this morning after all. Are you not going to eat, Katharina?" (Wendelin)

"I will, but..." (Katharina)

Because we cannot visit the tea house at the ridge, we enter one in the city, but the city's appearance and the tea house's interior completely looked like a scene from a historical drama.

Commoners and peddlers are eating dango's and such while drinking tea.

"Welcome to our shop!"

A pretty poster girl*, who wore an apron and a Mizuho uniform, which resembles a kimono quite well, shows up. *(T/N: kanbanmusume ... a pretty girl to attract customers)*

Her age probably isn't that different from ours.

Her black hair, which extended down to her hips, was tied up in a bundle in the back. She was an orthodox, Japanese-styled beauty.

That's a pretty poster girl for you.

"What's your order?"

"Your love, please." (Erwin)

"Err..."

"Humph!"

"Ouuch!"

As the other party is a beautiful girl, Erw immediately tries to pick her up, but mine and Burkhart-san's fists drop on his head making him sit down on his seat forcibly.

"Don't make me lose face!" (Wendelin)

"But, I want to be loved..." (Erwin)

"Did something happen with that man?" (Therese)

"He had his heart broken a little while ago." (Wendelin)

"I see." (Therese)

Therese faced the playboying Erw with a slightly sympathetic look.

"Even though his face is nice, a woman will pull back since he's too greedy."
(Therese)

Therese's analysis was 120% correct.

However, I do believe that she shouldn't talk about someone else's matters.

"Excuse me, what's your order?"

It seems that the poster girl is used to handling such guests.

Without any care, she asks us about our order.

“Tea for everyone! And the entire menu!” (Armstrong)

“All of it?”

“Indeed! Everything!” (Armstrong)

Doushi was a free spirit in a different meaning.

He orders the shop’s entire menu.

As it appears that even the poster girl didn’t anticipate such a development, she’s quite surprised.

“Doushi, can you eat that much?” (Burkhart)

“No worries!” (Armstrong)

“It’s alright.” (Wilma)

Burkhart-san asks while looking worried, but in addition to Doushi there’s Wilma here as well.

There’s probably no need to worry if it’s at the level of a tea houses’ menu.

“I will start from the dango’s.”

Simple white dango’s, herb dango’s with anko in it, and skewered dango’s in a sweet soy glaze; the sweetness of eating them after a long time drags me into a maelstrom of deep emotions.

“They are delicious, aren’t they, dear?” (Elise)

“I’m inferior to a professional after all, huh?” (Wendelin)

“Next time we will challenge it, too. Let’s go back after buying the ingredients. It’s said that if the climate and soil quality is different, even the same crops taste differently.” (Elise)

Certainly, the taste of rice and adzuki beans might be nice in Earl Mizuho country where the winters are cold.

As expected of Elise who is an expert in cooking.

She pointed that fact out quickly.

“The things you occasionally make, Wend, they were dishes from Mizuho. How did you know about those?” (Ina)

“From the library in Breitburg.” (Wendelin)

Ina asks a perceptive question, but the library of Breitburg has the feudal lord's support and boasts of a scale in the number of books collected that ranks second to only the royal capital Stadtburg.

As expected, since even Ina hasn't seen through all the books in the library, she didn't realize that I'm lying.

"Wendelin, thee are interested in books and food? It seems like we will get along." (Therese)

"Therese-dono, are you skilled at cooking?" (Wendelin)

"Somewhat. I can't make too many dishes, but what I can do isn't limited to trivial dishes either." (Therese)

That's what Therese says, but since I don't know her cooking ability there wasn't anything I could reply to it.

If I actually have her make me something, it's possible that she will make me eat something outrageous.

Currently I don't even have time for such things. Ignoring it here is probably the intelligent solution.

"The sweet red-bean soup is delicious, but I wonder how they are getting their hands on sugar?" (Luise)

"The sugar is harvested from sugar beets."

Poster girl-san answers Luise's question.

Given that the sugar coming from sugar canes has a high price as an imported spice, it seems to be normal to obtain sugar from sugar beets in Earl Mizuho Country.

It seems that the remains of the squeezed beets are used as fodder for the cattle.

"That's not different from the sugar from the sugar cane."

"Since its similarly sweet, I will end up getting fat again." (Katharina)

"Though you are often saying that, Katharina, you actually appear to not weigh much..."

When we eat sweets, Katharina always says that she will become fat if she

doesn't diet.

It's really strange since she isn't gaining weight like the bourgeois wives of the capital.

"Is that so?"

"Mostly the feeling of her cheeks when embracing her." (Wendelin)

"Wendelin-san..."

Katharina ends up being astonished, but this is also a point I won't concede on.

Although being overweight isn't good, it's also a fact that I'm not attracted to overly thin women.

However it's often said that women are fussy if many of them gather in one place.

I ate delicious-looking food while talking with Elise and the others, but among them there were two people who were creating an odd scenery.

"All of them are delicious!" (Armstrong)

"It's time for another round." (Wilma)

"Certainly, it is as you say! Onee-san! Get us the entire menu once more!" (Armstrong)

"Once more!?"

While piling up a large amounts of plates, Doushi and Wilma were devouring heaps of sweets and even demanded a second serving in the end. Even the poster girl ends up reflexively raising her voice at Doushi who ordered the entire menu twice.

"You two, are you alright?"

Cutting a single sweet bean jelly into small pieces and eating those, Burkhardt-san was truly worried about those two while showing an expression as if he had a sour stomach.

"No problem!" (Armstrong)

"Plenty of room left." (Wilma)

“If you say so...” (Burkhart)

Burkhart-san, who finished eating the sweet bean jelly, was amazed by the appetite of those two.

It’s probably supported by his feeling of wanting to drink alcohol soon though.

“There were many things I ate for the first time, and they were very delicious, too!” (Armstrong)

“Satisfied.” (Wilma)

“That is, if you eat that much...”

Having savoured sweetness at the tea house, we move towards the next shop.

Burkhart-san was astonished at Doushi and Wilma who ate a dreadful amount of sweets, but even I want to tell them various things.

“There’s still plenty of food ahead of us, but...”

Certainly, the sweets, which were served in the tea house, were delicious if compared to the things I created with my low cooking skill.

Now that I think about it, those were dishes I created by using trial and error while suffering hardships in the Savage Lands during my loner childhood, but one should go to specialists for the best results after all.

This means it might be necessary to hire a cook from the Mizuho people.

I decided that I will consult about this later with High Earl Mizuho.

“Don’t fret! My stomach is only filled by less than half!” (Armstrong)

“Lots of room left here as well.” (Wilma)

“Then it’s fine.” (Wendelin)

“Is it really!?” (Erwin)

Erw, who failed to pick up the poster girl, retorts at me, but since we are still going to get other food, it will be problematic if I tell them that they can’t eat it. As it’s impolite to not order anything after entering a store, there’s no problem as long as they can eat.

The bill won’t be that large either.

“Next is... Found it!” (Wendelin)



『Soba』 is written on a sign curtain hung at the shop's entrance.
 I'm finally able to eat soba after coming to this world.
 Since it would kick up too much of a fuss and as I would be considered weird, I enter the store's inside while pretending to have found this store spontaneously.

"They serve both, chilled and hot soba."

I enjoy both options, but Elise's group didn't order anything but one type.

"Get us the entire menu." (Armstrong)

"Looking forward to it." (Wilma)

"All of it, dear customer?"

"Don't worry since we can eat it without any problems!" (Armstrong)

"As you wish..."

These two once again surprised the soba restaurant's onee-san, who came to take our orders.

"It's delicious, you know?"

Since there was soba in the south as well, I tried to obtain and make them, but with my skill they ended up becoming thick pasta noodles. I tried to experiment with noodle sauces as well, but the taste was lacking. Soba is food you can't make successfully unless you have a certain degree of knowledge.

Despite that, it can be normally eaten in this Earl Mizuho Country. Going by the current situation, I should be able to greatly look forward to other Japanese food, too. However, there's a single problem.

"Even though it's the long-awaited Mizuho cooking, we can only eat it until tomorrow morning."

Since dinner will be served at the high-class hot-spring hotel High Earl Mizuho prepared for us, I should be able to expect a lot from the alcohol and the food. But, there's also the trap called dinner and breakfast being at fixed times. I want to eat various dishes until we have to return if possible, but if I overeat too much, dinner won't fit in my stomach anymore. That's a seriously troubling matter.

"As I have a limited stomach size, the problem is what I shall eat, I guess."
(Wendelin)

"Why are you seriously worrying about such stuff...?" (Erwin)

Erw looked at me with an expression showing that he doesn't comprehend.

"If only I could eat as much as Doushi and Wilma." (Wendelin)

"Imitating those two is dangerous." (Erwin)

I end up being considered a strange fellow by Erw, but I didn't want to be told that by someone whose pick-up attempt was ignored by the waitress-san even in this soba restaurant.

"Then, you try to pick her up, Wend! You will definitely fail!" (Erw)

It's impossible for me to do that. Even though I have come here to eat, why do I have to do something like picking up girls? One thing has nothing to do with the other, I believe.

And, Erw has forgotten the most important fact.

“What kind of stupid stuff are you saying...?”

Though I stopped while thinking *Damn it*, it was already too late.

“Erw, what will you do if he really gets deceived by someone because of that?”

“I don’t wish to increase the quarrel over household affairs.”

“Useless retainer. You can’t even pick up any girls.” (Wilma)

“I believe that many women would swarm him if Wendelin-san did something like acting like a playboy, but...” (Katharina)

“Damn it! Just where can I find my own looove~~~!?” (Erwin)

Erw, who was called worthless by Elise and the other women, began to stress eat soba.

“If they are selling noodle sauce and dried noodles, we will be able to eat soba at any time.”

“Are you that pleased with it?”

“Yes. How about the alcohol, Burkhart-san?”

“This cold alcohol, it’s delicious. Let’s buy it and go back.” (Burkhart)

Rather than the soba, Burkhart-san apparently liked the Japanese sake-like alcohol which he had ordered as supplement.

He had another cup of the cold alcohol while eating soba dumplings as a side dish.

“(I saw those kinds of old men in soba restaurants on my days off.)”
(Wendelin)

Of course that’s an event which happened in Japan.

“Earl-sama, you didn’t think about something rude just now, did you?”
(Burkhart)

“No (isn’t he a perceptive one...). Onee-san, about this alcohol.” (Wendelin)

Once I ask the young waitress-san about the alcohol in order to dodge the

question, it seems to be called Mizuho Sake which uses rice as an ingredient.

“(I guess it’s Japanese rice wine after all.)” (Wendelin)

I try to sample it and the taste was the one of Japanese sake.

“Now then, I’m greatly satisfied.” (Armstrong)

“Thanks for the treat. Since I’ve heard that it’s healthy to eat moderately, I will stop around here.” (Wilma)

Wilma said something dreadful, but I decided that I didn’t hear it. Once we finished our meal at the soba restaurant and left the store, Wilma and Doushi, who ate a large quantity in this place as well, revealed satisfied expressions while stroking their bellies.

“I think that’s only natural considering how much you have eaten though.” (Erwin)

On this topic, Erw is right with what he’s saying.

“Next is shopping, I suppose.”

Clothes will be first since there are many women, but this is Earl Mizuho Country.

As those clothes are basically items which are called Mizuho clothes and use the same way of wearing as kimonos, it’s futile if I don’t recall how to fit kimonos. Elise’s group is happily checking ornate hairpins, which had expensive jewels attached to them, and Mizuho clothes with beautiful patterns in a high-class-looking store which had 『Dry Goods』 written on its signboard, but they decided to buy them on the next occasion.

“It’s regrettable, isn’t it? Let’s hire a maid who is capable of helping with the dressing.”

“I think that’s too extravagant.”

“I do have money after all.”

I will negotiate with High Earl Mizuho about a maid, who can help with the dressing, later as well, I guess.

“Earl-sama, you usually don’t live very luxuriously, do you?” (Burkhart)

As Burkhart-san says, our usual livelihood isn't that extravagant. Since we belong to an Earl household, we keep up the minimum of outwards appearance, but the inside isn't like that at all. Given that we are also working as adventurers, there isn't any great difference to other adventurers when we are camping. Even the ingredients such as choco, the native fruits of the Demon Forest and the monster meat weren't paid with money since we are actually getting them ourselves. Import and purchase of food is probably the entry in the account book with the highest expenses.

"Wendelin, thee are gentle to thy wives." (Therese)

"Really?" (Wendelin)

"As I'm a Duchess, I'm getting bored by nothing but strangely servile folks. The ones who praise the clothes I tried on are only the merchants, who want me to buy them, and retainers who will never tell me that they don't suit me." (Therese)

At least at the time she wore clothes, she'd like to have a man capable of normally telling her whether those clothes suit her or not. In Therese's current position that was also a wish that can't be granted to begin with though.

"Even if Mizuho clothes are impossible, can we at least buy accessories?"

The shop next door was selling accessory cases and combs which had expensive ornaments embedded as lacquerware. In addition there are also expensive tea utensils, lacquer work and hanging scrolls. There's indeed a great number of Japanese-like goods being sold.

"Elise, how about this comb?" (Wendelin)

"It's easy to use and enters the hair gently." (Elise)

Since the merchandise isn't that expensive, Elise and the others buy the ones they like one after the other.

"By the way, Wendelin, can't thou buy one for me?" (Therese)

“No... That might be impossible...” (Wendelin)

If I suddenly bought something for a noble from a foreign country and moreover a woman who isn't my wife or lover, strange rumours would very likely spread.

Besides, currently my position is just that of a magician who was hired by Therese.

It would be preposterous to give a present to a person in such high position.

“Even if it does turn into a rumour, I won't particularly mind though.”
(Therese)

“I will be the one troubled by it!” (Wendelin)

If the nobles of Helmut Kingdom learned of it, there would definitely be some among them starting to say such things as 『Earl Baumeister was ensnared by a prince-elect of Holy Empire Urquhart』 or 『He succumbed to her allure』.

“Next is a magic tools shop, huh...?”

Once we entered another magic tool shop, a lot of articles were lined up inside.

Even though its outward appearance is Japanese-styled, it's spacious completely like a large consumer electronics shop.

“Welcome!”

After browsing through the displayed items, many of them are general-purpose items and all of them are smaller and their price is around twice as expensive as the the ones in Helmut Kingdom.

But, as it seems that their mana consumption efficiency is great according to the clerk's explanation, many of them run for around 30% longer than the ones in Helmut Kingdom if they are charged with the same amount of mana.

They excel at miniaturization and mana conservation techniques.

Surely the items were similar to those made in Japan.

“The magic tools created by Earl Mizuho Country have a higher efficiency and power than those made by the empire.”

There isn't that much of a difference in performance between the magic tools produced by the empire and the kingdom.

In other words, it was no exaggeration to call Earl Mizuho Country the best on the continent at the current point in time.

However, we didn't buy any.

The magic tool types, which we discovered in the underground storehouse in the Demon Forest, were highly efficient after all.

“(However, the shapes and the arrangement of the switches is quite similar, isn't it...?)” (Wendelin)

Apparently Earl Mizuho Country has existed since the time when the empire was a small kingdom in the south.

Though it's only a small portion of the Mizuho clan members who seem to know about their roots, they might have moved here from the area around the Demon Forest.

If that was the case it would explain them possessing a unique, advanced magic tool production technology.

What might have caused the technological level to drop in comparison to the past possibly was the matter of losing a lot of skills during their nomadic period.

“You aren't buying, Wend?”

“The performance of the items from the underground storehouse, we found in the Demon Forest, is good.” (Wendelin)

“Now that you mention it, that's certainly true.”

“Aah! But let's buy some.”

“Perhaps for selling them to the magic tool guild?”

According to Ina's thinking, we should be able to make some profit by selling the tools to them.

The magic tool guild has bought a large quantity of the items, we discovered in the underground storehouse in the Demon Forest, and all the remains of the Rock Gigant Golem by relying fully on their too excessive assets.

All of it was for the sake of new technological development for magic tools, but frankly, the results are questionable.

With them being repeatedly told by their surroundings that they have no results to show, they should buy the magic tools of Earl Mizuho Country as examples for a high price all the more.

“It looks like it’s pretty much prohibited to take them along to a foreign country.”

“Is that okay?”

“The items are circulated into the empire. I think there are also some among the kingdom’s nobles who possess some.”

Since those are items which can be bought in the empire if you pay money, it’s impossible that not a single magic tool has made its way out to the kingdom as well.

Besides, even the empire hasn’t caught up to the performance of the magic tools produced by Earl Mizuho Country.

That was also evidence for the production technology being hidden.

“That bunch from the magic tool guild. They will likely buy it since they have the money. It would be no more than earning some extra money.”

Even if they aren’t able to buy them, it will likely yield a good profit if we sell them to someone else.

The share, which isn’t affected by import taxes, can be sold cheaply within Baumeister Earldom.

“All types.”

“Umm, customer-sama?”

“As I said, give me all types.”

“Err... Are you really sure?”

“Yes, really.”

“As a matter of fact, there are also items I recommend except those on display.”

Once I placed a large amount of oobans in front of the clerk, he received me while having a face full of smiles.

He brings out the items which weren’t lined up at the storefront and explains their uses politely.

“I look forward to you visiting our store once again.”

Having bought all types of the magic tool shop's merchandise, we head straight to the grocer.

In reality the magic tools don't matter.

This place is Earl Mizuho Country which owns a Japanese-styled culture. In that case there's only one item I want.

"I have been defeated after all, haven't I...?" (Wendelin)

"Ah, they have the 『Miso』 and 『Soy Sauce』 that you created, Wend."

Luise was surprised by the miso and soy sauce of which there are many varieties.

"Say Wend, you reproduced the flavouring of Earl Mizuho Country, didn't you?"

"I guess those were created by Earl Mizuho Country. I didn't realize since it was written in a worn-out book in the library."

Though I'm repeating myself here, but that's of course a lie. Since Luise hasn't the hobby of going to the library to read books, she probably won't ever realize it.

『Strong Flavour』, 『Light Flavour』 and 『Tamari*』; they have a wide range, don't they?" (T/N: *variety of rich soy sauce*)

That applies to soy sauce but there is even miso resembling Hacchou Miso* and light-brown miso ranging from sweet to salty flavour. Of course I bought all types. (T/N: *a special miso produced in Okazaki City in the Aichi Prefecture*)

"The qualities of kombu, katsuobushi, the noodle sauces, ponzu, tsukemono, nori and rice is great, isn't it..." (Wendelin) (T/N: *Google them if interested, can't be bothered any more with all that food stuff...*)

This place is a goldmine. Although I can't buy too much since we will go to war soon, it will probably be alright for a while if it's just the share we use up by ourselves.

"They have dried noodles as well, don't they!?"

Since they were also selling dried soba and udon noodles, I bought these to some extent, too.

“Oops! Forgetting mirin is no good!”

Alcohol and Mizuho Sake was also sold. A large quantity of shochus made out of rice, wheat and potatoes.

These can be used for cooking as well, and not just for drinking.

It’s a place where I want to buy as much as possible.

“Shishou-sama, why is Wendelin-san that happy?” (Katharina) (*T/N: Shishou = teacher/master as in teaching martial arts*)

“He’s been such a man for a long time. It’s not like he’s enticing women, so, isn’t it fine?” (Burkhart)

“I guess so. I think it’s cute, but...” (Katharina)

It appears that Burkhart-san and Katharina are talking about something behind me, but deciding to not mind it, I bought up large amounts of ingredients and seasoning made in Earl Mizuho Country from then on.



“It looks like you are pleased with Earl Mizuho Country, Earl Baumeister-dono.” (Toyomune)

“Yes, thus please make sure that I can come here freely.” (Wendelin)

“I have to coordinate it with Duchess Philip-dono and the empire as well, but the part of you spending money while shopping is very welcome.” (Toyomune)

“I’m sure you want to protect the citizen’s livelihood by improving the economic activity.” (Wendelin)

“It helps that you understand quickly, Earl Baumeister-dono.” (Toyomune)

Once we headed to the high-class inn, which was assigned to us, as it became evening, a banquet sponsored by High Earl Mizuho was held there.

Since it’s a hot-spring hotel, we are also wearing the yukata which were provided by the inn.

As the bath is a naturally circulating hot spring that’s fed by a source, it’s effective against nerve pain and rheumatism.

With it apparently having the legend of improving childbirth in addition, Elise and the other girls told me that they want to enter it quickly.

There's an open air bath, too. It looks like mixed bathing is possible today. But first comes the meal. Once we enter the tatami-matted banquet hall, numerous dishes, which appeared usually at obon, were lined up. Sashimi, tempura, high-priced cow and pig meat that was roasted with miso and nabe with small seafood.

It's a deluxe edition of the menu I ate at the time when I went on the company outing at a hot-spring hotel in my previous life.

"I want a cook as well..." (Wendelin)

"The people's migration belongs in the sphere of the empire's government's field of duty. I can't tell them anything in that regard." (Toyomune)

"Therese-dono?"

"Wendelin, the parts thou fuss about are unusual for a noble." (Therese)

Even if I'm told that, it's necessary to employ Mizuho people from now on to have them help Elise and the others putting on kimonos and yukatas as well as to have a skilled cook make Mizuho food.

That's something I won't yield on.

No, it's for that reason that I will once again kill people.

If others learn of that fact, I will doubtlessly be treated as savage.

At least officially I'm moving for the sake of both countries' stability.

"Let's go with a toast then?"

It seems that they don't hold overly formal banquets in Earl Mizuho Country. I hear that they hold a banquet in such format, no matter who visits them.

"I like it, but there are many folks panicking about His Majesty the Emperor being forced to sit on the floor." (Therese)

Although there are flat floor cushions, tatami are treated as floor in the empire's centre.

Though I don't think so since shoes aren't allowed.

"As they will only be stiff even if they visit. It's convenient in reverse if they don't come because of that." (Toyomune)

High Earl Mizuho reveals his true thoughts without hiding anything.

As a result of that, the emperor had never made an imperial visit to Earl Mizuho Country.

Since they are half independent, the guarding is troublesome. Each time they made plans for it, it ended up vanishing in the end.

“It’s the same with the prince-electors. It’s probably only me who ever came here.” (Therese)

Therese continues to talk while drinking hot Mizuho Sake.

“As for sightseeing, there are many interesting locations for the empire here.” (Therese)

The empire is a multiethnic nation, but there are unexpectedly few cultural differences.

The cultures ended up being absorbed over the last 2,000 years.

The only one among them who maintained its uniqueness, Earl Mizuho Country, was regarded as a popular tourist spot by the common people and the nobles besides the prince-electors.

“Even though tourism is our main industry, the visitors are visibly staying away due to the current disturbances. Good grief, that duke-dono, who hails from a young, ambitious household, can’t read the mood at all.” (Toyomune)

High Earl Mizuho complained about the lowered income.

Even this hot-spring hotel which became our lodging place today, apparently suffers from wealthy guests not coming due to the coup d’état uproar.

Under these circumstances, sightseeing being out of question for people at such level was only natural.

“If the disturbances drag on, the empire will decay, won’t it?”

“Seen on short-term it will decline no matter in what direction the situation moves. It looks like Duke Nürnberg has a sophisticated, detailed, long-term plan though.”

Therese was bitter towards Duke Nürnberg, too.

It shouldn’t be possible to create an empire, that gathers under one strong, centralized authoritarian rule, that easily.

The more unreasonable Duke Nürnberg gets, the higher the possibility for the

empire to decline.

“He’s a troublesome person.”

“He has too many high aspirations, I guess.”

Although it’s a banquet, the coup d’etat and Duke Nürnberg, who is its ringleader, end up becoming a popular topic in the conversations.

However, before long the matters to talk about lessen and the banquet finishes slowly.

“Tomorrow will be an early start. Shall we enter the bath earlier than usual and go sleep afterwards?”

It’s the first time since my previous life for me to get into a hot spring and moreover even an open air bath.

I did have baths by digging up rocks, filling them with water and heating it in the Savage Lands during my childhood, but strictly spoken, those weren’t open air baths.

I decide to exclude those since they were mere outdoor baths.

“Erw, let’s go take a bath.” (Wendelin)

“Y-Yea...” (Erwin)

I try to head quickly to the open air bath after being able to have my fill of dinner, but the gaze of Erw, whom I invited, was absent-minded.

Once I look ahead to the place he’s staring at, I see a single woman standing there.

“Erw, she is?” (Wendelin)

“Yea.” (Erwin)

With him only saying that much, there’s no need to tell me any further. In other words Erw fell in love at first sight with a woman he met at a new place once again.

“(That guy shouldn’t fall in love with women at any place he goes to.)”

“(It’s probably because he’s young.)”

Burkhart-san and Doushi whispered among each other, but without a doubt

they are thinking that he will be rejected once again.

Certainly, if you look at her properly, she's quite the beautiful girl.

Her height is around 160 cm. She is standing in a corner of the room with a proper posture while wearing a haori and light blue long underpants.

Her black hair, which is hanging down to her waist, is bound into a ponytail. She doesn't seem to be that different in age compared to us.

A Japanese-styled beautiful girl with the air of a swordsman. Seeing her face, I was reminded of Karla.

It's not like they are that similar, but her atmosphere resembled that of Karla well.

"Her?"

"Is she a guard?"

"They have many women in their ranks as well. She is connected to High Earl Mizuho. Look, she has three katanas, I think." (Therese)

Her possessing a 『Magic Katana』 means that she belongs to the Battou Unit. Her skill should be quite high.

Yes, she was a beautiful swordgirl-sama.

"Basically the 『Battou Unit』 is an all-male unit. I have heard that there are only three women among them. Among those three, she is apparently overwhelmingly powerful" (Therese)

According to Therese's explanation, she will accompany us from tomorrow onwards for the sake of guarding 『Duchess Philip-sama's esteemed party』. Well, I guess it's about us.

"That girl is called Haruka Fujibayashi and seems to be 16 years old. Once she reaches my age, she will become quite the beauty." (Therese)

Since she's a beautiful Japanese-styled swordgirl whose atmosphere resembles Karla, it might be inevitable for Erw to fall in love with her.

"Rather than thou, Wendelin, Erwin fell in love?" (Therese)

"Possibly." (Wendelin)

"It's not a bad combination. Both of them use the sword. Haruka Fujibayashi's

home seems to be a lower retainer household. She was selected for her sword skills which are unparalleled.” (Therese)

The instant he heard Therese-sama’s words, Erw’s entire body was filled with fighting spirit.

There shouldn’t be any hindrance in her case for her to become his wife.

Understanding that much, a fire of determination dwells once again in Erw’s eyes.



“Nice to meet you. I’m called Erwin von Armin and I serve as bodyguard of

Earl Baumeister.” (Erwin)

The minute he understood that it’s not all hopeless, Erw rushed over at lightning speed to Haruka’s position and introduced himself. Even though he should act as my guard, I don’t even enter his eyes anymore.

“Let’s have a preparatory meeting for a bit as fellow guards who will cooperate together.” (Erwin)

“Preparatory meeting, he says, eh...” (Luise)

Of course he does it properly, but there are also parts that are seen as happy-go-lucky by the female camp. Going by what Luise said, she doesn’t see it as anything but picking up girls in the disguise of a preparatory meeting as objective.

“I’m called Haruka Fujibayashi, Armin-sama.” (Haruka)

“As fellow escorts who will guard Duchess Philip-sama together, please don’t add “-sama” to my name. Also, those close to me call me Erw.” (Erwin)

“Erw-san, it is?” (Haruka)

“Yes! I look forward to working with you, Haruka-san. Although it’s quite abrupt, but let’s make arrangements regarding the guarding. The guarding inside this inn is perfect, but it will be necessary to strengthen our vigilance once we leave Earl Mizuho Country.” (Erwin)

“Yes.” (Haruka)

The beautiful swordgirl Haruka seems to basically have a serious character. She doesn’t mind at all when Erw starts to talk about the job and also not being called by her name all of a sudden.

Once being told that it’s a meeting under the pretext of work, she began to honestly arrange things together with Erw.

“Such serious Erw, that’s the first time I see that.” (Ina)

“Me too.” (Wendelin)

I agree with Ina’s comment.

Noticing that the girl called Haruka is seriously trying to do her best after being chosen for such an important mission, he probably schemes to have her fall in

love by him following up with her endeavour.

I believe he has a splendid observation and strategy, but until now that has never led to the realization of love.

“By the way, are you the eldest daughter of the Fujibayashi household, Haruka-san?” (Erwin)

“No. I have an elder sister who’s married already, and I also have an elder brother who’s going to inherit the household.” (Haruka)

“Is that so?” (Erwin)

At once Erw’s face becomes all smiles.

He’s probably thinking that he can marry her without any kind of problems.

Well, I do understand his feelings.

Even from my viewpoint, she is a beautiful girl you don’t meet that often.

“(However, a beautiful swordgirl in this place, huh...?)”

Moreover she has a great style for no special reason.

Her stance is good since she’s accustomed to the sword. The Mizuho clothes, she’s wearing, are accentuating her breasts quite a bit.

She might have slightly smaller breasts than Katharina, I think?

“Do you have any hobbies, Haruka-san?” (Erwin)

“Eh? Is that related to guarding in some way?” (Haruka)

“It has no direct relation. But, it’s not like you can stay tense forever just because you are on guard duty. It’s important to communicate with the people with whom you are guarding during the breaks.” (Erwin)

“I see. Is that how it is? I cook during my holidays...” (Haruka)

“So you are not only a swordsman, but also know of the manners as woman, Haruka-san.” (Erwin)

“I’m not that skilfull, but...” (Haruka)

Haruka reveals an expression showing that she’s not as dissatisfied being praised by Erw.

Maybe she doesn’t have much immunity against men.

“His experience in making passes at women has increased.” (Katharina)

Katharina, who recognizes his skill in swordsmanship albeit thinking that he’s a playboy, has an amazed expression.

However, his remark regarding guarding duty isn’t wrong either.

Besides, until now Erw accomplished his guard duty without there being any kind of attack against me.

“Wend. Let’s go take a bath.”

“Wend-sama. Bath.” (Wilma)

“Yeah, right.” (Wendelin)

I think it’s the best to leave the matters of Erw and Haruka to the people concerned.

Given that I was led by Luise’s and Wilma’s hands, we move to the open air bath right away.

“There’s a man’s bath, woman’s bath and mixed bath.”

“Man’s...” (Wendelin)

“To the mixed bath!”

“Mixed bath!”

“Mixed bath, it is!”

“Mixed bath.”

“It’s the mixed bath.” (Katharina)

Elise and the others overrule me, who tried to say man’s bath, by saying mixed bath.

I didn’t have a speck of interest in Doushi’s and Burkhart-san’s naked bodies, but I thought it would be more comfortable to enter alongside fellow men.

“If it’s your esteemed companions, they went into the direction of the man’s bath just now.”

According to the middle-aged, female employee, both of them apparently hurried into the man’s bath.

“Isn’t mixed bathing fine? I will also...” (Therese)

“Therese-sama, from now on it’s the period of married couples. Please restrain yourself.”

Therese, who hears about the mixed bathing, tries to wedge herself in there too, but Elise gave her a warning without leaving a single opening. Without doubt Doushi and Burkhart-san foresaw this development and escaped ahead of time.

“It’s not like it has been reserved by the Baumeister household. There won’t be any problem with me entering, right?” (Therese)

“That is...”

“There is, isn’t there? The empire’s Duchess Philip and the kingdom’s Earl Baumeister entering the same bath while naked will turn into a major incident if leaked to the surroundings, won’t it?”

What Katharina said was a sound argument. It’s not only bad for our reputation, but also it’s possible that Duke Nürnberg will announce that Therese and I are trying to steal the empire after forming an alliance, if things go badly.

“(Mixed bathing with Therese has a charm, but...)” (Wendelin)

If we are careless, it’s not unlikely that even the kingdom’s side will harbour worries.

I didn’t believe that this had an appeal for Therese to the degree of closing her eyes to the possible issues.

Though I considered it to be quite regrettable in my mind.

“Since it’s before an important greater cause, please refrain from causing any problems, Therese-sama.” (Katharina)

Being flatly told so by Katharina, Therese gave up and headed to the woman’s bath while we went into the mixed bath.

“Therese-sama is persistent.”

Luise sighs while soaking in the open air bath. The open air bath had a luxurious, spacious structure as one would expect of a high-class inn.

Even when soaking in the open air bath, which was surrounded by rocks, with six people, it still had plenty of space left.

The surroundings were concealed by a bamboo fence, but the full moon above and the visible ridgeline of the mountains made for a beautiful scenery.

Sounds of bamboo regularly hitting on the shishiodoshi* echo from the adjoining Japanese-styled garden. *(T/N: Water-filled bamboo tube clacking on stone when emptied, common sight in old Japanese gardens)*

“Maybe Therese-sama is targeting the mana increase...” (Luise)

“Luise, sshhh!” (Ina)

Ina hinders Luise to speak any further in panic.

The mana of five people, who should have already hit the limit of their mana capacity, increasing and moreover the possibility of their night activities with me being the reason for that was a secret.

As Amelie-sister-in-law-san, with whom I was doing the same, didn't have the basic aptitude of a magician to begin with, her mana hasn't increased at all. However, the mana of Ina and Wilma, who are unconsciously using mana while swinging their spear and battle axe even if it's below elementary magic, is increasing.

According to Burkhart-san's prediction, the number of magicians, which has been known to be 1 in 1000 until now, has the potential to become 1 in several hundreds now.

『However, that's only in case they have sex with you, Earl-sama.』 (Burkhart)

The mana capacity of Elise, Luise and Katharina, who should have hit the limit through training and vessel unification, has increased as well.

If society learns of that, my location will be swarmed by large quantities of women.

『Hehehe! It's a rendezvous with a gentleman after 50 years, but since my mana will increase with this, it's a reward.』

『I'm actually looking forward to it.』

Old magicians who have passed the age of 80 will advance on me to embrace me.

I can't consider this as anything but a nightmare.

Even so, it's still fine as long as it's just women.

『Ussu! I'd like you to raise my mana ~ssu!』

I will definitely go mad on the day when a man presents his ass to me. It's considered to be a taboo by the church, but in front of the charm of increasing the number of magicians and raising the mana capacity beyond its limit, it's quite possible for the church to tolerate it by treating it as ceremony. I think it was a nice timing for Ina to stop what Luise was trying to say.

“Luise, you have a loose tongue. The walls have eyes and ears here.”

“It's certainly a verbal slip.”

For Earl Mizuho Country it will probably be troublesome if something happens to us.

Once I probe with 『Detection』, I can see the response of people who are serving as guards in the surroundings.

“(Are they possibly called 『ninja』 or such?)” (Wendelin)

“Peepers?” (Wilma)

Even if their objective is to guard us, did they maybe see our naked bodies? Having sensed that, Wilma put herself on guard.

“It's alright, Wilma. All of them are women.”

“You did well to grasp that...”

Rather than the thoughts of 『Then they are kunoichis?*』, I feel bothered by Luise's super-detection. (*T/N: Female Ninjas*)

“If it's men and women, there are subtle differences in their mana.” (Luise)

“I know that, but...” (Wendelin)

I have been taught that by my childhood master, but I was also taught that people, who can actually distinguish that, don't exist. Master and Burkhart-san said that it's impossible. Both are capable of specifying an individual once they remembered their mana signature, but differentiating whether it's a man or a woman by just their mana after seeing it for the first time is a special skill that only Luise owns.

“Luise, amazing. Next time, teach me.” (Wilma)

Wilma was honestly impressed.

“Recently you became more and more amazing, you know?”

Due to her ability appearing to be already on equal term with Doushi, I couldn't hide my surprise.

“However, recently my mana has gone up after all. At the same time I feel like my ability to sense mana has gone up as well.” (Luise)

“If you feel like it, you can obtain your own peerage.” (Katharina)

Katharina also gave her stamp of approval to Luise's actual ability.

“No need. The management of a territory seems to be annoying. I will popularize the magic combat style in society together with my children as Wend's wife.” (Luise)

“The children between Wendelin-san and Luise-san, huh...? Combining it with the point that our mana increased...”

Maybe children like Doushi will be born.

Katharina seems to be expecting something like that.

“Let's return to the topic? It's a wonderful open air bath.” (Elise)

Certainly, it will get troublesome if others listen in on us.

Just as Elise says, we returned the topic to the open air bath.

“I want to come here regularly.”

“Next time I want to stay here comfortably for several nights.”

It was Elise who started to talk like that while smiling, but as expected of her. Her breasts are floating in the bath.

I noticed it at the times when we entered the bath together after our marriage, but since breasts consist of fat, they float.

“(It's a magnificent view.)” (Wendelin)

Katharina's breasts are floating, too. Once I look at Ina's and Wilma's breasts through the hot water, they have a different romance about them compared to looking directly at them.

Certainly this is a reward from god for me who survived by even going as far as killing against my will.

Although it wasn't without feelings of guilt, I won't be able to survive in this world if I mind it too much.

I decided to go with this take on the matter.

“Buu~~~! My chest has this much individuality...” (Luise)

Luise, who has the lowest chest size, jumps on my back.

They grew since the time she was 12 years old all the same, but Luise's breasts were an A-cup after all.

“That's true. They have individuality. I like them, your breasts, Luise.”

(Wendelin)

While feeling the small breasts of Luise on my back, I try saying something similar to a perverted old man.

If I consider my mental age, it's not that strange though.

“That's right. My breasts have rarity value. Besides, I won't talk about anyone in specific, but I'm not a woman who missed her chance to marry due to age.”

(Luise)

“Oy oy...” (Wendelin)

If you ask about whom she's talking, it's of course about that lady who is still single at an age of 20.

“Hoo, who is a woman who missed her chance to marry due to age? Please do tell me by all means.” (Therese)

However, Luise is quite mean as well.

She is deliberately sarcastic towards Therese who is meddling with me.

Considering Luise's ability, it's unthinkable for her to not having noticed Therese approaching close-by.

“(Oy, oy, Luise.)” (Wendelin)

“(I perceived the presence of a woman, but I didn't think that it was Therese-sama.)” (Luise)

“(Liar.)” (Wendelin)

Although she is giving such an excuse, there's no doubt that it's a lie. She should have already remembered Therese's mana by now.

"Umm... Therese-sama?" (Elise)

"Don't worry. I'm wearing bath clothes for the sake of the innocent Wendelin." (Therese)

As expected of a spa for tourists, they have even prepared bath clothes for tourists although it's a custom to enter the bath naked with others. Therese wore white bath clothes.

"We will become fellow comrades in war who will fight while risking our lives. Such socializing is necessary as well, right?" (Therese)

She enters the bath while saying so, but on top of her body line being easily projected through the originally thin bath clothes, her nipples were visible due to the clothes clinging to her body in the bath.

I avert my gaze from Therese in a hurry.

"Therese-sama, I believe that to be improper for a woman in a high social standing though." (Elise)

"Aren't thou naked, Elise-dono?" (Therese)

"Is there anything wrong about a married couple entering a bath together?" (Elise)

"Certainly not. Thee might be able to become pregnant soon." (Therese)

Therese dodged Elise's attack evasively just like before. As expected of a prince-electress who's a candidate for becoming empress.

"It hit me suddenly, but if I marry Wendelin, this unproductive quarrel with you, Elise-dono, will vanish. If that happens, it will become peaceful." (Therese)

"Well, my position and stomach will always be exposed to war times."

Doubtlessly I will end up being regarded as a person who requires special attention by both countries.

Only that, please excuse me from bearing that cross.

She is a charming woman, but she isn't necessary anymore as Amelie-sister-in-law-san covers the mature aspect.

“Therese-sama, it will be wrong if you don’t offer a bait to the nobles you are going to gather from now on.” (Ina)

It’s just as Ina says.

Seeing that we are incapable of confirming the survival of the new emperor Urquhart the 17th and the other prince-electors, Therese, who is trying to defeat the rebel Duke Nürnberg, is the most important person as next emperor candidate.

“I will gather comrades by telling them that they might become my husband. Since it’s an old trick, I will use it of course. But, there will be never any guarantee that someone will become my husband.” (Therese)

“Then, do you intend to stay single, Therese-sama?” (Elise)

“Handling an empress’ husband is troublesome.” (Therese)

Even in the empire the male domination over women is strong. If she is careless, he might become nothing but a hindrance to a rule by an empress. Up until now there were candidates for becoming empress, but none of them was actually enthroned.

Since they always tripped over this problem, they couldn’t win in the emperor elections, it seems.

“The treatment of the maternal relatives is annoying as well. That’s why.” (Therese)

Therese, who soaked in the hot water next to me, clings to my arm. The sensation of her voluptuous breasts, which I can feel at my upper arm, is wonderful.

No, stop, I think this is getting bad.

“It’s fine with them just occasionally offering their sperm to me. However since there’s no romance with only that, won’t thou let me enjoy a time as married couple as well?” (Therese)

“No, that is...” (Wendelin)

“Please stop it already! Aren’t you just troubling Wendelin-sama!?” (Elise)

The angry Elise pulls me to her side and Therese gets separated from me.

Now I can feel the sensation of Elise's breasts pressing against my upper arm.

"Whether he is troubled about it is something that Wendelin himself decides. Isn't that so, Wendelin?" (Therese)

It's fine to get angry here and abandon our job as mercenaries, but once Duke Nürnberg's dangerous ideology becomes gradually official, it will become impossible to get a victory against him.

The empire, which would have destroyed Philip Dukedom and Earl Mizuho Country, would gather under Duke Nürnberg's reign and it was very likely that it would become hostile towards the kingdom.

In the worst case it's also possible that he will deliberately keep the empire in a quasi-war-state in order to unify it.

Facing towards the kingdom by making it a common enemy for the dissatisfaction of the nobles and populace whose impoverishment increased in the civil war was an act that was carried out occasionally in any world and country.

Then, once he continuously stations the increased military forces at the national border, it will likely influence the economy of the entire kingdom and the development of the Savage Lands.

As a noble of the kingdom, it will be wrong if I can't get Therese to win here. Not only is she anticipating that, but she's also starting to strengthen her support base in case of her becoming empress.

In order to prevent the meddling by maternal relatives, she's trying to make a child with me who is a foreign noble she just met.

No matter whether that child becomes the next emperor or not, it will give birth to a faction called the parent's kingdom faction in the empire.

She might be trying to protect her own descendants by using that.

"If thou desire, I don't mind taking off these bath clothes either, Wendelin." (Therese)

"No, it's fine!"

Elise and the others restrain Therese's temptations.

Thanks to that I didn't enjoy the open air bath overly much. Finally being able to just get a long, leisurely bath, it ended with me suffering from dizziness.



“Please save a person struggling through a hard time.” (Wendelin)

When I’m just out of the bath, I complain to Burkhart-san and Doushi for not having saved me.

“I have been certain that you won’t yield to her temptation, Earl-sama.”
(Burkhart)

There might be that as well, but it’s likely that Burkhart-san, who met the cute Therese 10 years ago, was unable to strongly tell her off.
Even considering it by age, he might be thinking of her like a daughter.

“For me it doesn’t change the result much no matter how it turns out.”
(Armstrong)

If my blood entered the Duke Philip household, it would be the first successful invasion of blood by the kingdom since the empire’s foundation.
It might be exaggerated, but nobles seem to be creatures who consider things in such manner.

“The official nobles of the central government are refusing with 『There’s no precedent』 as long as there’s no precedent, but once you create a precedent, things will advance with 『There’s a precedent』.” (Armstrong)

Therese should advance the political policies of increasing the coming and going of people and trade between both countries as it was happening before the coup d’etat.

Since the empire will be exhausted by the civil war even if she wins against Duke Nürnberg, an enlargement of trade should compensate for that.

If you exclude a part of the populace and nobles, the political thoughts aren’t that fixated about right and left.

If the trade improves the circulation of money even a bit, it might be possible to secure those radicals who woke up from their dream of establishing a new governmental authority in the future.

But then again, the appearance of people who incline towards nationalism and steal employment and concession due to that is something that is born in the world of politics.

“From the standpoint of nobles, an increase of family choices for their daughters to marry into and for their sons to be adopted into isn’t bad!”
(Armstrong)

If the number of children with mixed blood from nobles of both countries increases, it might also serve as a deterrence towards war.

Humans are creatures that will find a reason to invade, but there’s no other choice but to leave such matters to the future nobles.

“Even so, please don’t abandon someone in need of help.” (Wendelin)

“But, you know, it’s unexpectedly simple to evade her temptations.”
(Burkhart)

“Let me hear the method by all means.” (Wendelin)

I lend my ears to Burkhart-san’s advice.
Once I did so, he mentioned something unforeseen.



“I see. Such move existed, eh?”

“Such move means?”

Once I finish talking with the two old men, I return to my room.
The room, which has been assigned to us, is a spacious Japanese-styled room where six people can sleep with leeway. It seems to be the top class room of this inn.

It is a room for important merchants and nobles to enjoy their stay while bringing several wives and lovers along.

For some reason I’m considered as guest of honour by High Earl Mizuho.

“It’s a move to evade Therese’s temptation.” (Wendelin)

“That’s great then.” (Ina)

Ina was immediately attracted to it.
She was probably also fed up with Therese as 『Woman who doesn’t give up』.

“So, what kind of method is it?”

“It’s this kind of move.” (Wendelin)

I swiftly pull the obi of Ina's yukata.
She doesn't rotate around like in historic plays and she didn't say 『A~re~』 either, but the entire front part of the yukata opens and most of her front area ends up being exposed.
Her chest, which seems to be visible though it isn't, can be considered to have a very splendid angle.

“Wait a moment, Wend!” (Ina)

“The answer is that I have to enjoy the night time with everyone!” (Wendelin)

Therese was a woman who brimmed with sensual sex appeal at an age of 20, but she had a flaw.

Since she's an inexperienced virgin, she shouldn't have the experience and courage to boldly join in on such event.

Therefore, to prevent her sneaking in at night, I will play with my wives everyday.

This move was the idea of Burkhart-san who seems to be well-versed in such matters.

“This room is convenient for such matters.” (Wendelin)

Since there are futons on the tatamis and not beds, the preparations are finished right away once the futons are connected with each other.
Furthermore, as the futons are apparently high-class items, they are soft and light to a dreadful degree.

“I think that's a great idea.” (Luise)

“Isn't it? Ei!” (Wendelin)

“Aree~~~!” (Luise)

Once I grab the obi of the yukata of Luise, who joined my side in approval right away, she, who is easily influenced into joining some mood, spins around while raising the standard voice.

“What's that?”

“There are such situations in the Mizuho ceremonies as well.”

“I see. Wend-sama.” (Wilma)

“Ei!” (Wendelin)

“Aree~~~!” (Wilma)



She had a slightly low voice, but once I unwrap the obi of Wilma’s yukata, she

releases the standard yell as well.

However, I wonder where Luise obtained that information?

“Nyahaha. That’s fun. Well, next is Katharina then.”

“Me? Since I’m shy...” (Katharina)

“No use. After all it has the noble objective of evading Therese-sama by showing it to her.”

“You can’t escape.”

Katharina is caught by the excited Luise and Wilma, and gets dragged in front of me.

“Let’s have you join in properly! Ei! (Wendelin)

“Aree~~~!” (Katharina)

Even while saying that she’s embarrassed, Katharina probably has things bearing in mind about Therese’s lewd temptation.

Having the obi obediently unwrapped, she spins around while raising the agreed yell.

“By the way, what’s this about?”

“Umm, a bad-governor-attacks-young-girl play.” (Wendelin)

I explain that it’s a scene of an evil governor attacking a young geisha who is pouring alcohol at a banquet, which I have seen in a historical play in my childhood together with my grandfather in the countryside.

“Having the obi unwrapped, you spin around often in such arranged manner?”

“This situation is normal to be done with Mizuho clothes after all. Also, it’s an arrangement to rotate often once the obi has been undone?”

“The inner workings are deep, aren’t they?”

Katharina admired the depth of the Mizuho culture at a strange part.

“However, why did you know about it, Luise?”

“Because I bought this.”

There was a shop in the city where you can buy books and such, and among its merchandise was a painting that resembled colour prints of everyday life in the Edo period. Moreover she was apparently searching for paintings prohibited to minors which resemble pornographic woodblock prints in secret. On a page of an obscene picture book she opened, a pronographic depiction of the governor play was drawn together with a written story.

“I heard about it before from Margrave Breithilde-sama. Men are creatures who lose interest.” (Luise)

Therefore it’s essential to put the man in different situations so he doesn’t get tired of the woman, she was taught.

“If you recall what that person has said...”

“That’s right. You are with someone other than us... oops, that was a verbal slip. You work very hard on your duty as Earl, but we have to do our best until children are born.” (Elise)

Elise is slightly scary.

My relationship with Amelie-sister-in-law-san took the shape of being tolerated, but I guess it’s not that amusing from Elise’s point of view after all.

I have been given a warning.

“The last is me.”

Once I try to pull her obi after being urged on by Elise, Ina, who fixed the knot of her obi, appears next to her.

“Wend, since the last time was a bit lacking, once more...” (Ina)

Requesting that while having her face dyed red, Ina was quite adorable.

“Roger. Ei!”

“Ah~~~re~~~!” (Ina)

Without a doubt, if seen by a third party, they might wonder 『What’s so interesting about this?』, but it’s a win if they can get aroused while I’m enjoying it.

There’s also the just cause of preventing Therese’s interruption. That night I spent a noble-like night with five people.



“Uwaah, that’s amazing.”

“I pity the hostess-san a bit.”

The next morning, Ina and me, who woke up first, were lost for words due to the disastrous scene on top of the futons.

The nightmarish incident, which made Dominique drop the duster in despair in the mansion, ended up being repeated as if one may do anything once a certain line is crossed.

My goodness, 『Vitality Recovery』 is quite the sinful spell.

“Wend, I can’t move...” (Luise)

“Wend-sama, Elise-sama doesn’t open her eyes.” (Wilma)

Being urged on by Luise and Wilma, I cast healing magic on everyone including myself as well.

“Upon reflection, my healing magic, I don’t use it except at such times.”
(Wendelin)

Usually I leave it to Elise. Since we rarely get injured to begin with, there weren’t many opportunities to use it.

“Katharina, wake up.”

“Yesh... This disastrous scene is...” (Katharina)

If you say that it’s the usual, it ends there, but Katharina is speechless due to the tragic, disastrous scene caused by us thoughtlessly enjoying the fresh taste of a changed environment.

“I can’t overlook this as a lady.” (Katharina)

It was obvious that the inn’s hostess, who will come to air the futons, will fall into the same condition as Dominique.

From Katharina’s point of view, she considers that as embarrassing for a noble.

“Wendelin-san.” (Katharina)

“I at least remember 『Clean』.” (Wendelin)

“I’m weak at that kind of magic.” (Katharina)

Then don't throw out your chest and say it proudly while being naked, I thought.

According to Burkhart-san, Katharina was bad at magic related to livelihood.

“Well it's fine, I guess. Elise, get up.” (Wendelin)

“Yes...” (Elise)

I wake up Elise while casting healing magic. After using the 『Clean』 spell on all futons, we head to the morning bath.

Given that the hostess in charge of our room was there once we left it, I gave her a koban as tip and asked her to clean the room.

Since I tidied it up mostly, she shouldn't fall in the same state as Dominique.

“Earl-sama, it seems you were vigorous.” (Burkhart)

Once I enter the room, which was used for the banquet last night, to take breakfast after finishing my bath, Burkhart-san was already eating breakfast. The Mizuho-styled breakfast wasn't that different from the one of a Japanese hot spring inn after all.

Rice, miso soup, grilled fish, boiled greens in bonito-flavoured soy sauce, pickled vegetables, natto, baked seaweed and such.

All of it was a lineup of dearly missed dishes.

“(Earl Mizuho Country. You are the best!)” (Wendelin)

In a hurry I begin to eat the rice served in a rice bowl.

It was popular to eat rice in the south as well, but the taste of the rice here was exceptionally great.

The Akitsu Basin, where Earl Mizuho Country is located, is hot in summer and cold in winter, it has a large difference in temperature over the seasons.

In other words, there are proper seasons. That improves the taste of the rice. Since the water here is clean and delicious as well, this place provides conditions where you can harvest good rice.

“I'd like it to be put in a bigger rice bowl!” (Armstrong)

Doushi, who entered at almost the same time as us, ate by wolfing down the served mountain of rice in his bowl.

As usual that man has an amazing appetite.

“As result of you being active, Therese-sama didn’t trespass, right?”
(Burkhart)

It was just as Burkhart-san said.
To join in on that requires quite the resolve and experience. Therese had the former but lacked the latter.
Did she consider it to be regretful?
She entered the room, but begins to eat her rice quietly after sitting down in the seat next to me.

“Didn’t you get it done properly despite being younger?”

“Earl Baumeister, it’s the start of your harem legend.”

“Saying it comparatively, the numbers are lacking.” (Therese)

The inexperienced Therese has sex appeal, but talks like a sore loser.
Even so, it was a fact that a noble having five wives can’t be treated as owning a harem, just as Therese says.
At least I hear it won’t be called a harem unless I gather numbers in the two digits.

“It’s plenty if there’s five people.”

“If thou have property at the level of Wendelin, even five wives are already necessary at the very least.” (Therese)

“Then I will search for more in the kingdom.” (Wendelin)

“Thou, thou are unexpectedly mean.” (Therese)

Having finished the preparations for departure after breakfast, we will once again head towards Philip Dukedom in the carriage.

“Duchess Philip-dono, Earl Baumeister-dono, I will prepare the soldiers and wait for you.” (Toyomune)

After receiving High Earl Mizuho’s farewell, the carriage travels towards the north.
Once we leave the mountain road, which is located in the northern part of the Akitsu Basin, we will enter the Philip Dukedom right away.
Even considering it geographically, there shouldn’t be any pursuit party from

Duke Nürnberg anymore.

“Even here is no good, huh...?”

I try to float in the air a bit with the 『Flight』 spell, but I end up stopping it right away as a pain stabs my head.

If the effect reaches even until this northern area, it is fine to assume that the influence of the jamming device covers almost the entire empire.

Even if they analyze and mass produce the device while it's operating in Bardiche unskillfully, our stance won't be affected.

There was no other choice but to destroy this at all costs.

“However, how did Duke Nürnberg obtain that device?” (Therese)

“From a undiscovered historic ruin, I suppose.” (Wendelin)

Since even we were able to discover them, it's unlikely that the empire's side can't do so as well.

The Ancient Magic Civilization prospered on the entire continent.

“It will turn into a war where many people will die.” (Therese)

“Yes.” (Wendelin)

It's something unpleasant, but it was possible for the war to spread to the kingdom if we don't defeat Duke Nürnberg here.

That's why I decided to take part in a war where I will kill people.

“The social position of Duchess Philip is heavy...” (Therese)

I didn't say anything to Therese who entrusted her body to my shoulder while saying so.

It looked like Ebbo, who is at the front, wanted to say something, but he's probably thinking that he will incur Therese's displeasure if he disturbs her.

He quietly glared at me.

He is Therese's most faithful dog-kun.

“If there's a gentleman who is reliable, it will lessen my burden as well.”
(Therese)

Therese, who leaned on my shoulder while showing a sad expression, was sexy, but after all I'm brought back into reality right away.

I ended up being pulled over by Elise who sat next to me on the other side.

“Elise-dono, isn’t that heartless? Suffering from the heavy responsibilities here, it’s the important part for me to attract Wendelin’s affection by showing him my grief.” (Therese)

“Such conspicuous parts can’t be trusted. Even before that, Wendelin-sama belongs to us.” (Elise)

At the same time of Elise saying that, Luise wedges in between me and Therese and Wilma sits down on my knees. Moreover, Ina and Katharina, who sat behind me, tightly guarded my back.

“Therese-sama, please freely choose among the nobles from your own country.” (Elise)

“I don’t praise thieving cats.”

“Balance is missing age-wise.”

“I don’t admire someone who makes a move on the possessions of others.” (Katharina)

After Therese appeared, the guard of Elise and the others became excessively hard.

Since there’s also the secret that it’s possible to increase one’s mana by having sex with me, which results the elementary attainments as magician even if it’s microscopic, they probably didn’t want unnecessary women to approach me.

“Thy guard is solid. In that case, I will pretend that there’s something strategic to talk about...” (Therese)

“I will go together with you as his attendant. As the campaign’s priest.” (Elise)

Being strictly warned by Elise, Therese reveals a regretful expression. Ebbo, who saw this situation, had a relieved expression though.

“(However, he is looking at people with such eyes...)” (Wendelin)

Burkhart-san was on guard at the coachman’s seat. Doushi was sleeping and snoring apparently because of the large amount of food and the morning bath while keeping his eyes open once again. Erw looked happy while talking to Haruka about various matters.

“(I won’t complain, but it’s somewhat absurd...)” (Wendelin)

Therese’s retainers continued to check the surroundings through the carriage’s windows in rotation. There was no problem at all since they had regulated breaks in between.

“There a Demon Forest in the south? I’d like to go there once.” (Haruka)

“I will invite you once this war ends. There are plenty of southern fruits over there.” (Erwin)

“I love sweets.” (Haruka)

“You can even obtain the ingredients for chocolate.” (Erwin)

“I have only heard a rumour about the sweet called 『chocolate』 from the old man at the grocery store.” (Haruka)

“I will give you a bit.” (Erwin)

“Really!? Thank you very much.” (Haruka)

“(Huh? isn’t it going very well for Erw?)” (Wendelin)

While the confrontation between Therese and Elise continued inside, the carriage safely reached Philip Dukedom within a half day.

Chapter 84 – At last, the departure to the front

The carriage which left Earl Mizuho Country, safely entered Philip Dukedom.

It's cold in the Philip Dukedom, which is the northernmost territory of the continent and it's currently midwinter. Snow piled up on the large fields as well, but I guess it's a blessing that it's not to the degree of obstructing the carriage's advance.

The carriage proceeded through the outskirts of the central city Fierin, where the feudal lord's mansion is located, without trouble.

"Those fields are vast."

"Even for being in the north, Philip Dukedom is a big agriculture area."
(Therese)

Their focus lies on the cultivation of produce such as wheat, barley, rye and potatoes. But it seems they are also refining sugar from sugar beets.

They probably harvest two crops a year.

In spite of it being midwinter, crops have been planted on the fields.

"But then again the efficiency goes down in comparison to the southern sugar cane. Therefore we are cultivating sugar beets on large-scaled fields." (Therese)

As it doesn't seem that selective breeding as it's done on earth has made any progress, it appears to be hopeless unless they cultivate a large amount of them as the sugar beets have a low sugar content.

Even so, since it's easier than importing due to the distance of transportation, sugar manufacture from sugar beets has apparently become a key industry of the Philip Dukedom.

"Also, fishing and stock farming are popular as well." (Therese)

"You are doing stock farming?" (Wendelin)

"There's a large amount of soil, but it's cold." (Therese)

Thanks to the diligent endeavours by the Lan clan members of old, there aren't many monster domains in Philip Dukedom.

That's why you can call it a possible feat.

The meat of cattle, pigs and birds obtained through stock farming was an expensive good in other territories.

Since there's a lot of land, agriculture is prospering. But as the area at the northern end of the continent will become extremely cold once the season turns to winter, they have large pigs called 『Hairy Pigs』 grazing there.

“Though they are wild boars, they are livestock slightly similar to pigs. We raise them by having them eat the squeezed leftovers of the sugar beets.”
(Therese)

They are large and strong against cold. Their fertility is also full of vim and vigour. They are enthusiastically pasturing since they eat anything.

“Even the commoners are frequently eating the meat of 『Hairy Pigs』 in Philip Dukedom”, Therese explained.

By enhancing the processing to bacon and sausages and improving the ways of preservation, this has also turned into an exported merchandise.

“We are also actively breeding warhorses and horses for pulling wagons.”
(Therese)

“The military affairs and the economy are powerful then?” (Wendelin)

“Tentatively I have been told that I'm the most powerful among the prince-electors.” (Therese)

In addition there are also many mines and the manufacturing industry is growing, too.

Certainly, the city of Fierin that gradually became visible was a metropolis that won't lose to Breitburg.

“If it's about economic strength and military forces, we are superior to Nürnberg Dukedom. That doesn't mean that there's overly much difference though.” (Therese)

Though the mixed parentage of the ruling class, which serves as subjects of the empire, is improving, the independent spirit of the Lan people, who were the rulers of the north, is strong.

Based on the fact that having a dark brown skin is required for the family head of the Duke Philip household who should be the rulers, one can see that the empire's north is quite the unique region.

“There’s Earl Mizuho Country as well.”

The carriage enters the city of Fierin and heads towards the feudal lord’s mansion as Therese is explaining while smiling.

Once we arrive at the mansion which is similar to a fortress, two young men with one around the latter half of his twenties and the other in the middle of his twenties appear from inside the mansion.

“You were safe, Milady?”

“What a relief.”

“It’s my bane of having bad luck. Rather than that, there are visitors from afar here.” (Therese)

By the management of the two young men, we settle down after being allocated rooms, but they receive secret instructions by Therese who was with them.

“They are mine own elder brother’s children.” (Therese)

“That sounds complicated.”

“Yep. Just what are they thinking about in their hearts?” (Therese)

Even though it doesn’t look like they have insufficient ability going by the impression I got, they won’t be able to succeed the rank of duke due to the reason of having a white skin colour.

They probably have various emotions they are bottling up in their chests.

“What I was pondering about was the possibility of you, Therese-sama, being killed or taken prisoner due to a revolt by your elder brothers right after we arrived here.” (Armstrong)

While drinking the aquavit diluted with hot water he received in small gulps in order to warm up his body, Doushi mentions some dangerous things.

Even if they considered doing such thing, they would likely be stopped by Doushi right away though.

“Even if they plan that, it will end with everyone getting killed by Doushi and Earl-sama, right?” (Burkhart)

Burkhart-san’s thoughts were similar to mine.

Doing something like opposing Doushi with a small number of people while not being magicians is nothing more but the height of recklessness.

“No, Burkhart. They are not capable of doing that in the first place.” (Therese)

“Because their skin is white?” (Burkhart)

“That’s how it is.” (Therese)

For the Lan people who ended up being ruled by the empire, a family head with a dark brown skin is an absolute condition they won’t yield on. Therefore, even if Therese’s elder brothers staged a coup d’état, no one would follow them.

“My elder brother’s children have dark brown skins. But, even if they set up my nephews as family heads, it would be obvious to everyone who’s the ones pulling the strings.” (Therese)

Moreover, a child as supreme commander will also lose a winnable war. “There shouldn’t exist anyone needlessly following such a child”, Therese explained.

“However, there’s the possibility of Duke Nürnberg having set up a scheme, isn’t there?”

“I can’t prevent that, but in that regard both of us are the same, right?” (Therese)

Before coming to this room, Therese had ordered her elder brothers to announce to the lords of the north and of other regions to gather their soldiers for the sake of recovering the imperial capital that has been overthrown by Duke Nürnberg.

『Do you participate in the rebellion by supporting Duke Nürnberg or do you follow us, the Duke Philip household, in our attempt to defeat him?』 she asked. She apparently dispatched them while adding quite the radical declaration.

“Together with the information 『Earl Mizuho Country will side with us』.” (Therese)

During the unification of the empire, many ethnic groups converted into retainers and adhered to its rule.

The only one among them, Earl Mizuho Country, which preserved a shape of being half-independent, was regarded with awe by the nobles and their fief's population of other ethnic groups.

Moreover, it's the first time for them to dispatch an army for something other than defence. Coupled with their legendary strength, we will likely be able to obtain many allies, is what Therese seems to be thinking.

"The nobles, who have other ethnic groups under them, are probably trembling in fear due to Duke Nürnberg's movements. Most of them should look positively at joining us." (Therese)

"Are there that many ethnic groups?" (Wendelin)

There were Arab-styled and Chinese-styled building in Bardiche no matter how you look at it, but what one understands immediately by looking is that their skin was dark brown just like that of the Lan people.

The Mizuho people are obvious because of their black hair and pupils and as they wear Mizuho clothes. But, as a matter of fact there are many people where you won't know their origination unless you look properly since their outward appearance looks like that of mixed Westerns and Japanese halves.

"The intermingling of different races has progressed for around 1000 years. That means that the majority of the ethnic groups aren't that different in their outward appearance. Even the language has advanced into being uniform since the era of the Ancient Magic Civilization." (Therese)

More or less the ethnic group which has been living in the centre of the empire since the time when the empire still named itself as kingdom, has been called Urquhart people and they have apparently transformed into being the dominant ethnic group.

Duke Nürnberg caused a coup d'état and is trying to advance the centralization of the empire with that ethnic group as core.

"Nevertheless, the definition of Urquhart people is ambiguous as well." (Therese)

However, with the feeling of them being people living in the centre, their treatment around here might be similar to the treatment of Chinese people in the Chugoku region of western Honshu.

Biologically an Urquhart race doesn't exist.

"In short, you are saying that he hastens a centralized authoritarian rule, but first attempts to make the Lan people and the Mizuho people, that are quite obviously a hindrance to him, submit to him?"

"If he crushes them and puts them under slavery, the groups in the east and west will likely listen to what he says out of fear." (Therese)

Since the Lan people and the Mizuho people are an easily identifiable enemy, he will crush them.

Since they are strong, the other ethnic groups will easily yield once he makes them submit. That seems to be Duke Nürnberg's train of thought.

"So, what will be our schedule from now on?" (Wendelin)

"I plan to dispatch an advance force tomorrow." (Therese)

"We will carry out interceptive battles since we should be inferior in the number of military forces, but I want to prevent the enemy entering our territory and ruining it", Therese says.

"Also, in order to prevent a separation of the northern lords, it's strictly forbidden to fight in their territories. Accordingly..." (Therese)

Therese spreads a map on top of the table.

On the detailed map of the empire, a red circle was drawn in the middle between the northern territories and the area under the direct control of the central government.

"The 『Great Sorbid Wasteland』...?"

It won't be seen by just following the northern highway continuing into Philip Dukedom, but just as its name 『Great Sorbid Wasteland』 suggest, it's a vast wasteland.

It's under the direct control of the empire, but it has a border with northern territories. You can't secure water unless you dig up a water well. It's dotted with mines and mineral deposits which have been abandoned. It's a place where development has been put off.

"We will build a base here. And we will stop Duke Nürnberg's advance to the

north here.” (Therese)

“It won’t be a short, decisive battle?”

“Aye.”

Therese agrees towards Doushi’s question.

“Since this is a civil war, a short, decisive battle is desirable if possible, but...”
(Therese)

Therese thinks that we are at more of a disadvantage than Duke Nürnberg, who is currently suppressing the centre after having completely seized the south. Since it’s not like she has gathered all northern lords as of yet, she can’t advance her soldiers towards the imperial capital that easily.

“The method of delivering a blow to Duke Nürnberg by defending against his attack in the Great Sorbid Wasteland will cause cracks in his foundation.”
(Therese)

Their loyalty is strong. They will be able to deliver a blow to the southern feudal army and the imperial forces which participated in the coup d’état. Once that happens, they will be unavoidably able to cause unrest among the lords who are obeying Duke Nürnberg.

“Him having gained control of the imperial capital is a strong point, but on the other hand it’s also a weakness.” (Therese)

Especially that device, which jams the activation of spells and magic tools of the communication and movement category, wasn’t good.

Since it causes damage to the circulation of good and the traffic, Duke Nürnberg’s side suffers damage from holding the imperial capital instead.

“He’s a Duke-sama that doesn’t do anything decent, I guess.” (Burkhart)

Burkhart-san says so, but thanks to that device, the kingdom can’t take part in the civil war.

Since the device’s effect should be reaching the kingdom’s north as well, it’s impossible for it to take advantage of the civil war and dispatch soldiers.

Even if they sent soldiers across the ropeway that serves as temporary bridge over the Gigant Crevice, the imperial army on site and the nobles would likely

resist against the invaders.

Even if they were able to occupy the area, it would become necessary to govern that area next.

For a while they would continue to exploit the area, but they wouldn't be able to use magic airships to transport the goods.

War isn't as easy-going that you can win while having a serious shortage of supplies.

"If the kingdom meddles unskillfully in the civil war, it will get exhausted in exchange."

The ones who would be happy about it are probably only some of the merchants who consider it as beneficial if they can sell goods to armies and soldiers who want to raise war accomplishments.

"An extension of the civil war will ruin the empire, but at the current situation a short, decisive battle is impossible. I don't have any intention to cause our downfall trying to do the impossible. But then again I will likely give up and defect once we lose since I've got a bad character." (Therese)

Therese's thinking isn't particularly wrong. Something like being gallantly destroyed might be deeply impressive in records of historic tales, but in reality that's nothing more than foolishness. Even defecting to another country is to wait for the next opportunity. This might be something said by a normal, influential person.

"Since I will be likely worn out if something like that happens, I will become your concubine, Wendelin, and leave the rest to our children." (Therese)

In case the kingdom advances north, the Philip household might be restored by using her child, grandchild or later descendants.

In the end that's no more than one possibility, but nobles form connections with other families for such possibilities.

"It's the same as usual with Therese-sama..."

Luise is fed up, but there's another important matter besides that story.

"So, what's our job?"

"Of course the securing of the Great Sorbid Wasteland and the construction

of a permanent field camp in preparation for a protracted war. It's a suitable task for you, Wendelin, who is called Construction Works Adventurer."
(Therese)

"That nickname has spread even as far as the empire?" (Wendelin)

Since the schedule was decided, it will be bad if we don't depart quickly tomorrow.

As we can't use 『Flight』 and 『Teleportation』, everything takes time.



"That's a big horse, isn't it?"

"It's a northern special breed called 『Dosanko* Horse』. It isn't overly fast, but its power and stamina are splendid. It also endures with frugal food." (T/N: A horse breed native to Hokkaido)

On the morning of the next day after we arrived in Philip Dukedom, we immediately headed south on the northern highway towards the Great Sorbid Wasteland.

Our military forces are the Duke Philip household's feudal army and the feudal armies of several nobles who prepared their troops ahead of time after sensing the unusual events in the imperial capital. It's a total of 5000 soldiers.

The military goods necessary to keep an army moving are completely carried in magic bags by me and the magicians who have been employed by the Duke Philip household and the other noble households.

Since more than half of the army consists of foot soldiers after all, the scheme we have come up with to hasten the travelling speed after mobilizing a large quantity of horses and wagons, is to only allow them to wear clothes against the cold and to hold their weapons.

All of the heavy armour is on the wagons and inside the magic bags.

If the road in front is blocked by enemy forces, we will get rid of them with magic.

"Even if we hurry as much as possible, it will take two... no, three days?"

We have been given horses, but those horses were more than twice as big as normal horses.

If they are this big, they might also be regarded as different animals, but these

horses are traditional northern horses.

“Even if we move by horse, it’s not possible to have them gallop at full power. Since that’s the case, these slow-paced horses pose no problem either.”

They seem to be horses used for agriculture or to pull heavy load, but even then they walk faster than people.

They were prepared ahead of time by Therese’s elder brothers for the sake of pulling the wagons which transport the goods.

“Aren’t they doing their job properly? I thought that they would look for alternatives such as betrayal though.” (Wendelin)

“Dear, as expected, that might be going to far...” (Elise)

Although Therese said that it was impossible, I suspected her two elder brothers.

It was possible that they would be instigated to turn traitor by telling them 『White skin is preferable for the new Duke Philip. If you work well, you will be assigned a responsible post in the new empire』 according to Duke Nürnberg’s plans.

“My cousins aren’t that stupid. They know that the ones who will be purged next by Duke Nürnberg will be them, even if they succeeded in the betrayal.”

I mounted a horse together with Elise and a young, dark-brown-skinned man was sitting on a normal horse that was running next to ours.

As Therese’s cousin, he’s the family head of a branch family. He is the leader of this advance unit and his name is Alfons. He seems to be still 20 years old.

“The skin’s colour is important.”

“Yes. It might be something stupid if seen from the viewpoint of other people though.”

Although they yielded to the empire, the blood of the Lan people has to run thickly within the family head of the Duke Philip household.

That’s an absolute requirement. There were cases where someone with a white skin forcefully became the family head, but it never turned out well in the end.

“Besides, the children of both of my cousins have dark brown skin.” (Alfons)

If she defeats Duke Nürnberg, Therese should become the next empress, if going by the circumstances.

Since it's impossible for her to hold the seat of Duchess Philip and empress at the same time, she will naturally pass the duke title to her children.

"I see. In that case I'm relieved." (Wendelin)

"Right?" (Alfons)

Rather than belief, that never declines, and fanatic loyalty, that's something I can depend on.

"At any rate, what surprises me is that you can't ride a horse, Earl Baumeister." (Alfons)

"As eighth son of a poor Knight, I didn't have time to practise horse riding." (Wendelin)

In the former Baumeister household there were only a few warhorses. Even so, that doesn't mean that we had bought and kept a private warhorse like other nobles.

A good one was chosen from among the farming horses and I was only shown how to put a harness on it.

The fief's population, that didn't know the world outside, regarded it as a beautiful warhorse with only that much.

Actually, compared to the warhorses possessed by the Margrave Breithilde household, it can only be seen as a saddening packhorse.

However, even that one packhorse was apparently useful for the past Demon Forest expedition.

As it was a farming horse, it put up with frugal fodder. And even though it was slow, its stamina was good.

Also, it seems like there were also survivors among the expeditionary force who stilled their hunger by killing this horse.

In my childhood there was no time for the eighth son to practise horse riding during a shortage of horses.

Besides, as a magician, horses are unnecessary if there's 『Flight』 and 『Teleportation』.

In my previous life I at least experienced horse riding in establishments

belonging to amusement parks and farms when I went there on school trips. As often is the case, that was me riding one round while being led by the person in charge after successfully mounting the horse.

With such a level of experience, you can't expect me to get on such a large horse all of a sudden.

Therefore I'm currently just clinging to Elise's back while she's steering the horse.

"Wife-dono, you are skilled at handling a horse." (Alfons)

"That's because this horse's docile. Even if I was taught about it just a bit, it's alright." (Elise)

She's saying that modestly, but Elise is good at horse riding. It seems she learned it since it was necessary as there were also cases where she had to leave into the vicinity of the capital during her voluntary activities at the church.

As she was able to pick it up with just that, Elise is a perfect superwoman after all.

"Since it's right now a good opportunity, I will have Elise teach me in the breaks." (Wendelin)

"Good idea. Horse riding is indispensable for upper nobility."

As movement magic and magic airships aren't things that can be used that easily, horses are the most convenient for travelling normally.

However, the maintenance and training of horses costs money.

Especially for horses that become warhorses the costs rise exponentially.

Getting on a horse skilfully was also proof of high ranking nobility.

Even that Margrave Breithilde who was generally acknowledged to have very bad reflexes, can ride a horse after getting proper training.

"For a man it's wonderful to mount a horse and stick to you, Elise."
(Wendelin)

I won't go as far as telling her, but it's mostly the sensation of her butt.

"I know that feeling, but I believe it will be even more fantastic if you learn horse riding and have your wife ride in the back, Earl Baumeister." (Alfons)

Indeed, it's certainly as Alfons says.
Even while being from a different country and ethnic group, he was a splendid guy who understands a man's romance.

"Alfons, you are a great guy." (Wendelin)

"Earl Baumeister, no, Wendelin. So you were a man of culture as well?"
(Alfons)

Alfons and I exchange a passionate handshake from atop the horses.

----- End of Part 1 -----

It truly had the feeling of having obtained a friend for life.

"Dear, do you enjoy such things as well? Though we are a married couple..."
(Elise)

Elise asks me while looking embarrassed.
Even though we are a married couple who has already seen each other nude bodies, she's probably wondering what's so delightful about feeling her butt and breasts through her clothes.

"Elise, that thing has nothing to do with the other." (Wendelin)

"Haa..." (Elise)

That might be an eternal wall between men and women.
Elise tilted her head to the side as she obviously didn't comprehend, but even that appearance of her was quite adorable.

"Actually, my wives can't understand it either." (Alfons)

Since Alfons is the family head of a branch family as Therese's cousin, he appears to have already three wives.
You can also say that it's only natural for him to be a high-ranking person since he has been appointed as supreme commander of the advance unit.

"On my previous holiday I realized my dream." (Alfons)

"Dream, you say?" (Wendelin)

"That's right. I call it 『Dream of three nude aprons plan』..." (Alfons)

Even though they are the wives of a high-ranking branch family, he apparently

watched them from behind as they were preparing the food in nude apron outfits while grinning broadly.

He was a vulgar person to a frightening extent, but simultaneously I notice that I forgot something important.

“Damn! I haven’t done that yet!” (Wendelin)

“That’s a waste as it will be an even more superb view if you do it with five wives.” (Alfons)

“That’s definitely true! Next time I will have a go with that!” (Wendelin)

“I recommend to do so by all means.” (Alfons)

Since I was supported by Alfons, I decide to definitely do it in my mind.

“As expected of my soulmate!”

“Dear, is there anything good about putting on an apron while nude?” (Elise)

Elise asks me with an expression that tells me immediately that she doesn’t understand well.

She knows about the basic matters of men and women due to her education, but compared to Ina with her abundance of superficial knowledge about sex after borrowing strange books from Margrave Breithilde, she didn’t have any knowledge of that kind.

“It will get easier to bear a child.” (Wendelin)

“I wasn’t aware. That it’s easier to make a child with such method.” (Elise)

It’s not like I have lied in particular.

The serious Elise apparently decided in her heart that she must cooperate if that’s the case.

“Wend, you are...” (Ina)

That Ina with a lot superficial knowledge about sex tried to add something, but I don’t have such leeway now since I’m earnestly trying to learn horse riding.

At any rate, since there are few high-ranking noble members in our party, the members who can ride horses are few as well.

Elise, Wilma who learned horse riding with the help of Minister Edgar, and

unexpectedly even Katharina can mount a horse.

In her case; she secretly practised it thinking that it's natural for a noble to ride a horse.

Even her horse riding training was that of a loner.

She might actually surpass me in being a loner expert.

“Wendelin-san, aren't you thinking about something rude?” (Katharina)

“Isn't that always not the case? I was only fascinated by your magnificent horse riding figure, Katharina.” (Wendelin)

“Have at least a bit of prudence... Aren't you ashamed, Wendelin-san?” (Katharina)

It seems I deceived her skilfully.

Katharina's face is dyed red to due my flattery.

I guess it's no problem though as her horse riding figure really suits her well.

“Wilma, how's Ina doing?”

“I think she will learn it easily since her motor nerves are great.” (Wilma)

I have no doubt that me learning horse riding should take the longest.

My reflexes were ordinary no matter in what favourable light you assess them.

“Ooh! Katharina's breast are hitting my back! Wend, once we switch it will be paradise for you.” (Luise)

“Luise-san! Aren't you ashamed!?” (Katharina)

Katharina, who is teaching Luise horse riding, complained about Luise's old man comment with a bright red face.

“Even among Wendelin's wives, there's someone who can understand a man's romance?” (Alfons)

“Alfons-san, please don't mention anything uncalled-for.” (Katharina)

Katharina also complains to Alfons who recognises Luise as kindred soul.

“Good grief... A leader who makes one worried...”

Katharina says so, but I don't harbour any doubts at all about Alfons's qualities as leader.

He's always spouting stupid things, but the advance unit is well in order.

『About Alfons, he is usually only talking about stupid stuff, but for some reason he can keep everyone together well.』 (Therese)

With him having a mysterious charisma, his subordinates work happily. In reality, that has happened to the advance unit as well. That's probably the reason why Therese appointed him as the supreme commander of the advance unit, too.

“However, that is unsightly...” (Alfons)

Alfons's look faced Doushi and Burkhart-san who are riding together on one Dosanko horse.

“Certainly... no talent...”

Burkhart-san is grasping the reins in front and Doushi is sitting behind him, but seeing that, nothing stirs in my heart.

What caused this combination is that Burkhart-san can more or less ride a horse with his old man's wisdom, but a normal warhorse would be harsh for him, and Doushi would crush any normal horse because his body is oversized.

“I wonder whether carrying Doushi is difficult even for a dosanko horse?”

Because it had to actually carry the weight of three people, the horse with the two on top had a slightly slower speed.

“You guys, saying whatever you want...” (Burkhart)

“There's only Armstrong-doushi's hard chest pressing against your back, Burkhart-dono. For me that would be impossible. Absolutely impossible. I would request a relief right away.” (Alfons)

“The rumours appear to be true, Alfons-dono.”

However, Alfons's words are reasonable as well. Something like the sensation of Doushi's 100% muscled chest, no one will be happy about that unless they have a unique fetish.

“Even I'm enduring it.” (Armstrong)

“Don't say that, Doushi.” (Burkhart)

Moreover, Doushi says something cruel without realizing it. Even though he has Burkhart-san transport him since he can't ride a horse by himself.

“However, it was unexpected for you to be unable to ride a horse, Doushi.”

Since the Armstrong household is a military lineage, I thought that they would usually carry out horse riding practise.

“That's because the bodies of those belonging to the Armstrong household are big for generations now. Though there are largely-built horses through special breeding and training...” (Armstrong)

He was able to practise in his childhood at home, but when he left the household, it became difficult to obtain and maintain a large horse. Besides, Doushi is a magician.

There's no necessity to unreasonably mount a horse either. It might be correct to not try doing the impossible since it's been a rather long time since he could ride a horse last.

To compare it with my previous life, it might be the same as a paper driver. *(T/N: Someone who has a driving license but little experience in the actual driving itself)*

“If it's this horse, it looks good enough for me to buy it afterwards.”
(Armstrong)

Doushi was happy that he found a horse which he can mount normally.

“Dosanko horses are on the list of prohibited items for export though.”
(Alfons)

Given that there are no horses as good as this to pull loads and wagons, it has been apparently forbidden to take them outside the Philip Dukedom. As sole exception, castrated male horses have been employed inside the empire.

“As a matter of fact, even the dosanko horses we are currently riding are castrated male horses.” (Alfons)

Just as Alfons says, all of the dosanko horses had certainly scars of having been castrated.

It has been apparently decided to change all the specimen, which are drafted as warhorses, into castrated horses due to taking into account that they might be captured on the battlefield.

“But before that, dosanko horses can’t survive in hot places.” (Alfons)

Since the heat’s easily stored inside their large bodies, their survival might be limited to the kingdom’s north at best, Alfons predicted.

“How regrettable. However...” (Armstrong)

Doushi seems to have something that bothers him.
He suddenly turns his look to the side. The figures of Erw and Haruka riding on the same dosanko horse was visible at the end of his gaze.

“It’s because we were poor nobles as well...” (Erwin)

“Please don’t pull the reins too strongly.” (Haruka)

“With a feeling of leaving it to the horse?” (Erwin)

“Yeah, that’s right.” (Haruka)

Since Erw is the fifth son of a poor noble just like me, he almost didn’t have any experience in riding a horse.

Haruka has similar circumstances, but since her skills allowed her to be selected into the Battou Unit, she has received training there.

Thus, Erw received horse riding training after riding the horse together with her.

「お上手ですね」

「いや、まだ一抹の不安があるなあ……」

「そこは慣れですから」

真面目なハルカはエルに丁寧に乗馬を教えていて、

彼も彼女の指導を真面目に受けていた。だが、俺は気がついていて、

導師もブラントークさんもアルフォンスも同様で、

それは指導が熱心なあまりに後からエルの背中に体を押し付けているハルカに、

エルが心の中で歓喜していることをだ。

エルヴィン
通称：エル

ハルカ・フジバヤシ

“You are skilful.” (Haruka)

“No, I’m still slightly uneasy, you know...” (Erwin)

“You will get used to it.” (Haruka)

The serious Haruka politely taught horse riding to Erw, and he diligently received her coaching.

However, I have noticed it.

It’s the same for Armstrong, Burkhart-san and Alfons. Due to Haruka pushing her body against Erw’s back from behind with too much enthusiasm towards the coaching, Erw is delighted in his mind.

“(It’s mainly the breasts...)”

“(Obviously.)”

“(Is there anything besides that?)”

“(It’s a pressing setting. Haruka-kun has high points...)”

Without much difference in the things men think about, we simultaneously whisper similar things.

And, two days after that, we safely arrived at the Great Sorbid Wasteland while continuing our horse riding training.



“Good grief. The other side is eager as well...”

Three days after Duke Philip household’s feudal army’s advance unit arrived at the Great Sorbid Wasteland, I discovered a patrol of Duke Nürnberg household’s army in the distance while carrying out construction works at the southern side.

“Earl Baumeister, since our group will kill them, you can continue your construction work with a peace of mind.”

“I’m not worried about them though.” (Wendelin)

In preparation of the rebel army of Duke Nürnberg household’s feudal army and the rest advancing north, I’ve been repeatedly laying out moats against horses on the southern side of the Great Sorbid Wasteland and even cooperated in the construction of the field camp.

Though it was an act that blocks the northern highway which enables the traffic

and circulation of goods in the empire, it's no problem since the rebel's army prohibited the travelling of merchants and people towards the northern area in advance.

Our side is of equal status in that regard since we have been prohibiting the travelling of the merchants and residents living in the northern area, too.

It was a situation where the circulation of goods inside the empire was split into north and south due to the civil war, but since it's not really my fault, it can't be helped.

And the enemy patrols are regularly coming to see the state of our Construction Works, however they have been eliminated right away.

The reason for that is...

"It's because our, Earl Mizuho Country's, prided Battou Unit is here."

Several of the elite Battou Unit of Earl Mizuho Country that were hiding behind rocks *etc.* which dotted the Great Sorbid Wasteland, assault the patrol's knights and soldiers with swords.

They try to defend against that with swords and shields, but they end up getting their bodies cut into pieces by the equipped magic katanas.

What was left behind afterwards were only several cut corpses.

Each member of the Battou Unit who slew them, collects their corpses and the horses and comes back.

"How many times was it until now?"

"It's the fifth time, Milord."

"They are persistent. Don't forget to get rid of them each time they come here."

"As you order."

Once the members of the Battou Unit report to High Earl Mizuho, they put away the corpses and horses, and once again wait for the enemy after hiding. Being suddenly stabbed with magic katanas by enemies who erased their presence, they end up getting sliced into pieces even if they defend with steel swords and shields.

These magic katanas seem to have drawbacks in their mana consumption and maintainability, but even if you look at it through past history, their

amazingness is obvious.

Each of them is an elite who has overcome harsh selections and trainings. I could actually experience why the soldiers of Earl Mizuho Country are feared by the people of the empire.

“However, the war progress is disadvantageous for our side, I guess?”

We are succeeding in constructing a defensive field camp in the Great Sorbid Wasteland to prevent the rebel army to advance north.

Given that I have also been participating with Construction Works magic in this, its general parts were completed in these three days, though it loses to 『Sunomata Castle』.

Even our defensive forces are exceeding 10.000 soldiers after the additional reinforcements from Duke Philip household have arrived. High Earl Mizuho has joined us while personally leading 10.000 troops.

There were also nobles who have declared siding with us and have sent their armies, if we exclude a part of the northern lords.

Even the eastern and western lords, the majority of those nobles, who have territories in the north, are our allies.

However as we gradually are learning about the situation, it confirms that our side's at disadvantage.

Most of the south and centre has fallen into the hands of the rebel army. There seem to be only Lan and Mizuho people, who went into hiding, and a part of the nobles, who are pretending to obey while secretly betraying, left now.

At any rate, Duke Nürnberg has confiscated the assets of the Lan and Mizuho people. And he is also sending them to detention camps.

Economically that's not something admirable, but it's probably to prevent intelligence leaks and to hinder the destruction of the aforementioned magic tool that jams communication and travel.

“Never did I expect for all of the remaining prince-elector lords to turn traitor.”

They have turned traitors or rather they have to do so because their family heads are kept as hostages.

Most of the nobles were captured and placed under house arrest aside from those who resisted and were killed.

If you ask why we know this...

“They likely won’t abandon their family heads and side with us.”

“That’s for sure.”

A man with his body wrapped in black clothes is reporting to High Earl Mizuho.

I can’t see his face, but I think his age is around 30.

He seems to be the head of the intelligence unit of Earl Mizuho Country. They have inherited the name of 『Hanzou』 for generations.

His appearance is that of a ninja often appearing in historical plays.

“It’s troublesome that the speed of intelligence transmission has remarkably fallen due to communications and travel being blocked.”

“It’s the same for the other side as well though... It’s become troublesome.”

Making use of that, Duke Nürnberg suppressed the other prince-electoral households and the central territories which are in disorder due to the absence of contact from their family heads.

It’s not like all of them surrendered physically, but there were also prince-electoral households which couldn’t move what substantially benefited the rebel army.

Hearing the report from Hanzou, Alfons sighs.

“Hanzou-san, how did you obtain that information about the imperial capital?” (Alfons)

“Of course by using my feet and horses. We 『Ninja』 prepare every day assuming such situation might happen.” (Hanzou)

They seem to be gathering intelligence in enemy territory by running around and using horses.

Though we have equal conditions, it’s troubling that it takes time to do anything now that it has come to this.

“Earl Baumeister has his 『Teleportation』 and 『Flight』 blocked?”

Even if we scurried home, it would be bothersome since we would have to cut through the continent.

I feel like wanting to avoid such worst-case scenario, if possible.

“Instead, he is overwhelming with other magic. He has finished the foundation works of the defensive field camp in merely three days.”

Hanzou-san seemed to be surprised, but I was desperate since it will be troubling for our side if we get attacked by the rebel army while the camp’s completion is delayed.

First, since the objective is to lower their numbers by killing the lot which has been dyed with doctrines and opinions as well as stopping the rebel army’s momentum through defence, I have set up fences and moats against horses, and am continuing to build barracks, watchtowers and walls made out of stone and not tents in preparation for a long-lasting confrontation.

The materials for that were easy to procure since the Great Sorbid Wasteland is an area with many abandoned mountain mines to begin with.

After collecting the minerals which look usable, I cut up the stone which was left behind and turned it into solid building stone.

Though the mineral contents were insignificant since they have become abandoned mines in the first place, gathering these and using other magic to the utmost limit every day raises my mana amount as well.

There should be a number of even more amazing magicians in the empire which is a counterpart of the kingdom.

It’s also for the sake of not being killed by them that training everyday is important, I guess.

“Ughh! It’s seems you got strong as well, Luise-jou.” (Armstrong)

“Though the one who’s amazing is you, Doushi, who is teaching us while in a 3 vs. 1 fight...” (Luise)

“My grown confidence due to having increased my mana has vanished...” (Ina)

“Doushi. Too strong...” (Wilma)

Even while possessing a vast amount of mana as a magician, Doushi, who can’t use magic that’s useful for living like me, continued to practise in a real combat format fighting simultaneously against Luise, Ina and Wilma whose mana had increased.

Luise's fists, Ina's spear and Wilma's large axe seemed to be hitting him, but all of them were repelled by Doushi's 『Magic Barrier』.

“It looks like my 『Magic Barrier』 will break if it gets attacked too much.”
(Armstrong)

“Though my hands are tingling...” (Luise)

“Albeit being for training use, my spear ended up getting chipped.” (Ina)

“It's the same for my large axe...” (Wilma)

Even though all my wives became strong by increasing their mana due to special circumstances, Doushi still boasted a strength that was far beyond them.

“As you are 『Storm』, cut the stones properly and cleanly.” (Burkhart)

“My strength lies in cutting things up and blowing them away with wind though...” (Katharina)

“Earl-sama does it neatly.” (Burkhart)

“The plans to win against Wendelin-san in magic accuracy is still far ahead down the road.” (Katharina)

“Don't you have any intention to win? Or rather, if you don't learn such types of magic, you will end up being similar to Doushi.” (Burkhart)

“For me it's impossible to go to such extremes.” (Katharina)

Katharina also helped out with the quarrying of building stones under the guidance of Burkhart-san.

For her it's a necessary training since she still has slight problems with finely-tuned magic accuracy.

“Katharina, without realizing it, about Doushi...”

Doushi should be the world's strongest in solitary fighting strength without a doubt.

However, different from me and Burkhart-san, he can't use life magic such as 『Construction Works』.

Even the fact of Doushi having been able to learn 『Holy』 healing magic actually surprised Burkhart-san.

Given that even Katharina should consider it as impossible to become a combat

specialist at Doushi's level, she's probably placing priority on learning magic that can also be used for the development of her territory.

『Thanks to Earl Baumeister's group the construction of the field camp is going well. In that case, intercepting them is all that's left.』

----- End of Part 2 -----

『Will the rebel army really come?』

『Definitely. So don't be negligent on diligently preparing on site.』

Therese, who's planning to come here after settling the large amount of government affairs, probably wants us to raise the morale of our allied nobles. As they were named differently such as coup d'état forces, Duke Nürnberg household's army and such, we assigned the official name 『Rebel Army』 to them.

『Duke Nürnberg has done something that shouldn't be done. I think that satisfies the condition to call them a rebel army?』

Therese declared while facing her allied nobles.
Alfons secretly told me yesterday.

“First we should try to obtain predominance in the war's progress by raising the morale and not surrendering this field camp. That will deliver a blow to the rebel army.”

The military resources on the rebel army's side are large, but there are many who follow them reluctantly since they are labelled as rebel army. Therefore they want to pull such people to the rebel army's side in one go by winning here.

Alfons also predicted that the first offensive isn't that far away.

“On the other hand, won't the other side's morale drop if they lose?”
(Wendelin)

“They probably don't expect that to happen.” (Mizuho)

“I see.” (Wendelin)

I assist in the construction of the field camp until evening while having a chat with High Earl Mizuho.

Since I consumed my mana nicely as well, I returned to my own house. The house, which was built with stones I cut out myself, is well done for a hurried construction. Katharina was made to complete the interior instead of practising magic. It reached the point of us being able to lead a comfortable life since we set up the magic tools we brought along inside. Since cooking and such is being handled by Elise and the other girls in turns, there are no issues.

“Wife-san, please prepare my share as well.”

For some reason Alfons, who is in charge of the expeditionary force in this field camp, waited for the food while sitting at our table.

“My friend, why are you here?” (Wendelin)

“I simply got bored of it.” (Alfons)

In the rules of the Duke Philip household it seems to be stated that everyone has to eat the same meals in war time.

We are treated as mercenaries. There’s no problem since we are taking care of our food, from the ingredients to the seasoning, but it looks like Alfons’s group has to continue eating the same stuff every day.

“Rye bread, dishes that have steamed potatoes, sauerkraut and vegetable soup with bacon or sausages in it. Also, one cup of aquavit during off duty. As one would expect, I got tired of that after continuing it for three days.” (Alfons)

“What about Earl Mizuho Country?” (Wendelin)

“They are special.” (Alfons)

Usually they are dishing out cooked rice, pickled vegetables, dried plum, and meat or fish with miso soup.

No matter how you look at it, it’s Japanese food, but since the skill of producing magic tools is high in Earl Mizuho County, they don’t seem to have any troubles with the transport of ingredients.

“If you go there, you can eat something different. It’s delicious.” (Wendelin)

“Although I want to eat it very much as well, it’s troublesome since it will be treated as courtesy call if I go to visit Earl Mizuho Country’s encampment.”

(Alfons)

Since we are treated as mercenaries, that also means we could easily enjoy the delicious Mizuho food in an uncomplicated manner.

Since it's basically Japanese food, it was delicious food for me.

"For this reason it resulted in me getting treated here." (Alfons)

With a nonchalant look Alfons sat down in the seat between Doushi and Burkhart-san, and ate the stew made by Elise.

"My friend, your wives are skilled at cooking." (Alfons)

"They have to be able to cook for themselves since they are also working as adventurers." (Wendelin)

"I see. That's how you are avoiding Milady." (Alfons)

There's no way for that to be the reason.
It's simply because taking a foreign country's duchess-sama as wife will be nothing but trouble.

"How about you accepting her, Alfons?"

I believe he has plenty qualifications since he's capable as her cousin.

"Me and Therese are close as childhood friends. However, it's not such a relationship." (Alfons)

"Isn't it fine since it's a noble marriage anyway?" (Wendelin)

"Nooo... In this situation the burden of the post-war period will be heavy as well..." (Alfons)

Alfons expects that Therese will become the next empress after being victorious in the civil war. Since the imperial court at that time will be in a mess thanks to the rebellion, he predicted that it probably won't be any good unless he serves in the Imperial Palace as well.

"It's troublesome, but what will happen if the new administration collapses once again? When it comes to the new Duke Philip, it will be Therese's nephews after she succeeds the imperial throne. They need a guardian as well. Their fathers are still alive, but Philip Dukedom's government won't operate if I don't

help out due to the influence of skin colour.” (Alfons)

“Sounds difficult, my friend.” (Wendelin)

“If that happens, I guess I won’t have any other choice but to shorten the maids’ skirts? By the way, I don’t see Erwin.” (Alfons)

“Aah, if it’s Erw...” (Wendelin)

As a matter of fact he was taking lessons in swordsmanship from Haruka. Erw, who likes the sword and possesses money as well, consulted with Haruka about trying to gather a collection of Mizuho katanas since it’s a valuable chance, but...

『Katanas and swords are completely different items. Isn’t a katana that won’t be used pitiful?』 (Haruka)

“Since there seem to be people in the empire who are collecting them as works of art, it will be actually fine if you get introduced to one of them and buy a suitable katana.” The one who declared that seriously was the girl called Haruka.

Usually she is devoting herself to guarding us. She’s a serious person to an extent that she won’t readily join after being invited to tea by Elise and the others while saying 『I’m still on duty after all』.

Even so, if they invite her while saying that it’s my order, she participates and eats sweets while showing a happy face.

Since she’s a woman, she likes sweets very much after all.

『So, will you learn katana techniques?』

With that as the reason Erw went to the encampment of Earl Mizuho Country in his spare time and took katana lessons there.

According to High Eral Mizuho he seems to have a good aptitude.

“He is aiming for Haruka-kun? Or for a katana?” (Alfons)

“I guess it’s both.” (Wendelin)

Though he likes Haruka as well, he’s also fond of swords and katanas. I think that I’d like to have a katana, too, but I couldn’t believe at all that I will be able to master it by myself.

“So, is there any hope?” (Alfons)

“Maybe, maybe not...” (Wendelin)

It shouldn't turn into a problem due to pedigree, but the issue is that I have absolutely no idea how the far too serious Haruka thinks about Erw. Also, another point might be the existence of Haruka's elder brother.

“Haruka's elder brother serves in the Battou Unit as well, doesn't he?”

This inheriting elder brother was a far better swordsman than Haruka. Moreover he dotes on Haruna to an abnormal level. He hasn't complained about the matter of Haruka being assigned as our guard since it's his lord's order, but it appears that he isn't pleased about Erw talking with Haruka about things in this encampment. Thanks to that, Erw was relentlessly worked hard by that elder brother every day.

『In other words, that means there won't be any problems if I win against that elder brother.』 (Erwin)

From the point of view of Erw, who has a character that hates to lose in the first place, he seems to be treating that elder brother as mid-boss whom he has to defeat.

『As expected of the Battou Unit!』

『This man. He's stronger than I expected...』

There's no difference between swords and katanas if it's about killing people in actual combat.

Due to the fact that he is less superior in swordsmanship in comparison to Erw than he thought, it caused Haruka's elder brother's sense of impending danger to grow stronger.

“Such is the springtime of life for you.” (Alfons)

“My friend, you are quite dry, or rather...” (Wendelin)

“In my case it won't result in such development. I'm completely ignorant about martial arts.” (Alfons)

Although he's excelling as a commander, Alfons's sword skills are a good

match with mine.

He probably can't understand the idea of crossing swords with an elder brother for the sake of one's beloved woman.

Though it's a wonderful story if he somehow struggles to win or gets recognised for his skills even if he loses, me and Alfons would likely get killed instantly.

"Putting aside Erw-lads matters, they will be here soon, won't they?"
(Armstrong)

"It will probably take still a few more days." (Alfons)

"Doushi, is that something similar to battlefield intuition?"

"It's simply my calculation of the distance from the imperial capital and their marching speed." (Armstrong)

Alfons is admiring Doushi's keen forecast.

It might have been almost identical to his own thoughts.

Burkhart-san is the same as well. Both of them weren't perturbed at all even when they killed soldiers at the time when we escaped Bardiche.

They should have cut their way through quite the scenes of carnage in their early days.

Even master might have the experience of having killed people in the past, I guess?

"I'm looking forward to your participation, Earl Baumeister-dono."

"Do you have to expressly mention that?"

"If I don't do that, it will be difficult for me to eat my meals here."

In the end Alfons eats up the share of around three people. Receiving even the kingdom's special wine, which I stored in my magic bag, he returns to the troop headquarters.

"He has quite the guts. Alfons-sama, that is." (Ina)

Ina seems to be astonished by Alfons's impudence.

"If such person acts as the leader, we will have it easy as mercenaries."

While I have to use magic at the front line anyway, it would be unbearable if I had to even manage the military forces.

I will receive remuneration such as goods and money for the work I did. But the post-war empire will make sure to lessen my, Earl Baumeister's, influence. That might be the best method to prevent unnecessary troubles.

"Wend, if you can freely go shopping in Earl Mizuho Country, there won't be any problems, right?"

"That's how it is." (Wendelin)

Superior types of miso and soy sauce, which I created myself through independent study, are sold in that country.

Since I'm picky about my food, I wanted to regularly obtain those by all means.

"You joined a war for the sake of soy sauce?" (Luise)

"As expected, that's not all there's to it." (Wendelin)

I denied Luise's question while laughing.

In any case, there's nothing better but making this civil war end.

It's uncertain whether it can be finished quickly, but there will be too many, various inconveniences if it doesn't end.

If the kingdom gets dragged into it and intervenes, the empire will be ruined unnecessarily.

Even for the kingdom there should be only few things to be gained in comparison to the expenses and labour.

The development inside the country will get delayed as well. There will probably only be some people who will be delighted about it.

"However, to accept the job that easily..."

Elise is worried, but as a matter of fact I have already received quite the reward.

I take out gold and silver ingots from my magic bag and pile them up on top of the table which had the tableware tidied up since we finished our meal.

"That's a splendid amount, isn't it? But, what about it?"

"I borrowed it from the abandoned mines." (Wendelin)

"What about Therese-sama's permission?"

"Of course I got it." (Wendelin)

I answer to Burkhart-san and Doushi while revealing a smile that shows my evil character.

Naturally at the end a last exploitation has been carried out by the empire's magicians, who can use 『Extraction』 and 『Collection』 spells, in the abandoned mines which were dotting this Great Sorbid Wasteland.

Therefore there are absolutely no metal types, that look usable, left on the surface and dozens of meters below the surface.

However, what about further below that?

Moreover, extinct volcanoes exist in this Great Sorbid Wasteland.

Because of the gold gushing forth from the underground mantle, Japan, which is actually a volcano country, was called a golden country.

Using a large amount of mana, I spread the range of 『Extraction』 to several hundred meters below.

As it's the most suitable for the training of increasing my mana capacity by using a large amount of mana, I always did that before returning to our house.

“With these there won't be any losses for us even if Therese shirks the reward.” (Wendelin)

“It's very unlikely for her to do that.”

“My father-in-law said: A dead hero is a good hero.” (Wilma)

Contrary to his appearance, Minister Edgar has apparently read history books. He has told something smart to his in-law daughter Wilma.

“Also, if we destroy that device, it will be all right for us to escape with 『Teleportation』 in the worst case.”

“Got it. I will be sure to not separate from you, Wend-sama.” (Wilma)

Wilma gently sits down on top of my knee.

“As Wilma says, it's not uncommon for accidents to happen.” (Katharina)

“True. In the end we will kill their brethren.”

Burkhart-san agreed with Katharina's opinion, too.

It's a measurement against the increase in people of the empire resenting us for obtaining achievements by participating actively.

“Ebbo-san, was it? There’s definitely a number of such people.”

I recall that annoying guy when I destroyed the other carriages in order to hinder our enemy’s means of transportation at the time we escaped from the imperial capital.

“There are also cases where people got executed after announcing that they went against military orders since they didn’t want to give them their rewards after a rebellion.”

The people of the empire, who will be unhappy due to many losses occurring due to the rebellion, will turn us, who killed many of their brethren as foreign mercenaries, into scapegoats.

It’s not possible to say that it definitely won’t happen.

“I believe that won’t happen if we restrict the discussion to Therese. But, if it happens...” (Wendelin)

“What will we do if it happens, dear?” (Elise)

“We will retaliate appropriately.” (Wendelin)

Though it ended up turning into a slightly scary talk, we move to the bedroom since it’s soon time to sleep.

Since I carefully clogged up the cracks in the house, it’s warm with no cold air entering from outside.

However, as there was no way for me to make that many rooms, there were basically only two bedrooms.

“A room for the men and one for the women, it is...?”

“As a noble it’s indispensable for Earl Baumeister to have children, but...”

Since currently it’s a time of war, it’s probably safer to avoid that. I also don’t have the fetish of doing it while being heard by Doushi and Burkhart-san.

“I’m home.” (Erwin)

“Erw, did you train until now?”

“There was that as well, but I ordered a katana, too.” (Erwin)

Erw and Haruka are alternating in the night guard duty of this house with the other soldiers.

Since it's Haruka's turn today, Erw went to order a katana for him to use.

"So, you want iron sand?"

Ten-odd katana smiths are following the Earl Mizu Country's military forces. They carefully carry out such things as forging new Mizuho katanas to be used on the battlefield and maintaining the existing ones.

Since the special maintenance of the magic katanas is especially troublesome, they seem to be busy every day together with special magic tool craftsmen.

"A katana with a very good quality is impossible unless bought inside Earl Mizuho Country though." (Erwin)

For the ones used on the battlefield it seems to be plenty if they can be prepared here.

"You didn't get hold of a magic katana?"

"Those are bothersome to maintain. If you heard their price, your waist would give in." (Erwin)

Even if they are plundered, you can't use them for more than a few weeks well if you don't maintain them in a special way.

And that maintenance technique appears to be highly guarded.

Since it's a magic tool, even the price seems to be terribly high.

"Erw-lad, won't you get one if you take Haruka as your wife?" (Armstrong)

"Nooo, isn't that unreasonable?" (Erwin)

As Erw says, they are probably not that easy to obtain.

After all it's a technology that supports the superiority of the Earl Mizuho Country's army's quality.

"Do you intend to take Haruka as your wife?"

"For Haruka-san, there's no man who is promised to marry her."

After having learnt from his past mistakes, he seems to properly confirm such things.

“If I beat Haruka’s elder brother after learning the katana techniques...”
(Erwin)

It was unknown whether it will go that easily, but it will probably be alright since Erw should have more talent than me.

“Hahahaha! This time you will definitely realize your love!” (Armstrong)

“If I’m told such a thing, I actually feel a bad premonition.” (Erwin)

“That won’t happen.”

After that the four of us went to bed, but a single problem cropped up at this point.

“Gugoo~~~! Funu! Let me break those fingers!”

“griinnnddd”

“Can’t you just shut up...”

Since I just got married, I wanted to sleep together with my wives according to my male instincts, but that was impossible since Haruka’s bed was in the women’s room as well. Furthermore, Doushi’s snoring and dangerous sleep-talking as well as Burkhart-san’s bruxism were annoying.

With this always happening in these three days after it was decided that we will sleep together, our fleeting hope during the first day thinking that it’s because it’s an unfamiliar place was smashed.

“My married wives can sleep properly.” (Wendelin)

“Really, it looks like we will lack sleep.” (Erwin)

Erw and me began to earnestly try to sleep somehow by wrapping into the futons.

Giving up right away, I got stuck casting 『Sleep』 magic.

Chapter 85 – The First Sorbid Wasteland Engagement

“A superb view, isn’t it!?” (Armstrong)

“No, I don’t think it’s a situation where you would call it that...” (Wendelin)

One week after we set up camp in the Sorbid Wasteland, the rebel army finally sent forth its advance guard.

With the stone palings and trenches against horses we laid out along the road towards the southern tip in-between, both armies glare at each other.

The estimated military forces of the rebel army are around 40.000 whereas our allied forces amount to approximately 25.000.

Going by numbers, we were at disadvantage, but as for quality we shouldn’t lose to them.

Besides, since it’s a defensive battle, we shouldn’t lose as long as we don’t mess up... is what I want to believe.

We were stiff from nervousness since it’s our first war, but Doushi acted as usual as if it didn’t concern him at all.

Even Burkhart-san seems to be astounded by his nerves of steel.

I’m sure that he’s completely brazen-faced like a dragon.

“Let’s tear the imperial capital’s 『blue and white daikons to pieces!”

“””Ooohh~~~!”””

Moreover, the ones with the highest fighting spirit amongst our allies are probably the members of Earl Mizuho Country who have been dispatched for the first time to a battle other than their past defending ones.

From their point of view, the advocates of an Urquhart race supremacy in the empire’s centre and south are inexcusable and they will go as far as annihilating them if they come attacking. Such feelings among them are strong.

Being deployed on the eastern side of the defence encampment, they provoked the rebel army while holding up the katanas they drew.

Furthermore 『blue and white daikons』 is a contemptible name the Mizuho people are using for the centre’s people like those in the capital.

Since I personally like daikon, I want you to avoid using it in scorn too much

though.

Yesterday evening the pickled vegetables that resembled 『pickled daikon radish』 and the combined cooking in 『oden』 became a treat by High Earl Mizuho.

It went well together with the hot Mizuho sake in this still cold season.

“Their fighting spirit is roaring, isn’t it. That will be of help.”

And, in the centre of the encampment, the Supreme Commander Representative Alfons has taken up position together with Duke Philip household’s imperial knight order.

“Our numbers are lower than theirs, but will we manage somehow if we fight to decrease their numbers with a defensive battle?”

“I have high expectations of you, Earl Baumeister, for the sake of decreasing the casualties on our side. Best regards to Doushi and Burkhart-dono, as well.”
(Alfons)

“I got it!” (Armstrong)

“Well, there’s no other choice but for us to be in the centre.” (Burkhart)

In case of a real battle like this, the deployment of the magicians was important.

While a magician has mana remaining, they are a joker-like existence that is capable of mass slaughtering ordinary soldiers.

Of course the biggest number of them is placed at the troops headquarters. The military forces will end up collapsing quickly if the supreme commander gets killed after all.

However, there’s also the opposing move of leaving the defence of the headquarters thin on purpose. There’s also the possibility of using the clever scheme of diminishing the enemy soldier’s numbers in one go by deploying powerful magicians at the left and right wing.

That kind of deployment is one of the possible strategies, but as a matter of fact, thanks to the device that jams 『communication』 and 『movement』 spells, it turned into a situation where we are troubled by the stationing of the magicians.

Since reinforcement by flying over won’t work, I have a feeling that they took

the safe measure of putting us in the centre and spread the remaining magicians equally all over.

The Duke Philip household actually employs a number of magicians, consisting of one high-level, four intermediate-level and fifteen elementary-level magicians, that can't be compared with someone like Margrave Breithilde. Even the other noble households are employing unexpectedly many magicians. In addition to them, even the adventurer's guild was ordered to temporarily recruit magicians.

It seems that there's such a system in times of war. There were many magicians who responded to that.

The empire's adventurer guilds are currently split in two.

The northern branches have been baited by Therese with being promoted to the imperial capital's main headquarters after the civil war is over and have allied with our side.

The central and southern branches appear to be cooperating completely with the rebel army.

There are also some branches, who have announced their neutrality, among them. The rest of the guilds were in a state of being split into two factions depending on whom they are supporting.

In case of a reintegration after the war, Therese will likely end up with quite the hardships.

“No matter which side's military forces; both have gathered as many magicians as possible. There are also many folks who deny supporting either side as they hate such situations, but the supply of monster materials and magic tools will decrease for a while.”

Burkhart-san seems to be worried about the influence on the economy, but this much is inevitable as the civil war has to end.

Besides, pondering about that is Therese's and the empire's people's job.

“I guess there are many magicians from the Ran race and Mizuho people?”

“That's because it's a critical moment deciding life and death for these ethnic groups.”

If one watches Duke Nürnberg's way of handling things, it might be natural to feel a sense of impending danger.

There are a lot of magicians from the Mizuho people and the Ran tribe who had a dark brown skin colour. There seem to be especially many magicians employed individually by Earl Mizuho Country. Their quality shouldn't lose to that of the centre.

“The relief units quality is high as well.”

“Earl Baumeister's wife is a superior healing magician.” (Alfons)

Alfons seems to place great expectations on the ability of Elise's healing magic.

If a great number of injuries are healed quickly, that will likely influence the army's strength substantially.

Together with the healers that were dispatched by the church, Elise works as member of the relief unit slightly in the rear.

I have her devote to healing in the rear since her offensive means are lacking even if she went to the front.

However, a disturbance occurred at that point.

『Eeh? You are splitting apart the relief unit from the one of Earl Mizuho Country?』 (Elise)

『Elise-dono, I know the fact about you also being a priestess of the church, but this issue is an adult consideration.』

『I heard the rumours, but...』(Elise)

The problem, which caused the most heated dispute when the empire made Earl Mizuho Country a protectorate, was this issue of religion.

As a matter of fact Earl Mizuho Country believed in another religion than the one of the church.

I don't know whether that's owed to them being Japanese-styled, but the religion is a like a mix of Buddhism and Shintoism. We have also seen several temple-like buildings in Earl Mizuho Country that had Shinto shrine archways.

『The radicals in the church urged to have the Mizuho people convert religiously.』

If they did such a thing, it would have been highly likely for the Mizuho people to unite and start a religious war.

Heavy losses would have appeared on both sides, I guess.

『After all, much blood flowed at the time when the empire assigned Protestantism as its state religion.』

The firm believers of Catholicism attacked protestants. Due to the protestants' side retaliating as well, it apparently went as far as being on the brink of a civil war.

This happened even though they are the same religion.

It would have become terrible if they pressed the Mizuho people to convert against their wills.

『Accordingly, they came up with a compromise policy.』

Although they are praying to the same god, the form is slightly different. The Mizuho faith is something like a denomination of the church. That's how they forcibly handled it.

『The church agreed to not propagate its belief inside Earl Mizuho Country in a secret treaty. And the Mizuho faith promised to not propagate its belief in the rest of the empire either.』

It seems there are also people who have become believers of the Mizuho faith among other ethnic groups and moved their residence to Earl Mizuho Country. Likewise there are believers of the church among the Mizuho people living outside Earl Mizuho Country. But, since it was a very small minority, they weren't minded overly much.

『Understood...』 (Elise)

Elise isn't stupid, neither is she a religious fanatic. She understood people who believe in other religions, but there are probably some parts she can't agree with no matter what, too. It might be inevitable since she has been involved with the church since her childhood.

『Being unable to approve since it's a religion different from your own, is not much different from Duke Nürnberg, you know...』 (Wendelin)

『I'm sorry, dear.』 (Elise)

『Because you haven't seen anything else but the church since your childhood, Elise, I understand even if you can't agree at some parts though.』 (Wendelin)

It's an arrogant manner of speaking, but this might also be the way of thinking of a person who was originally Japanese and has a vague view on religion.

『That's right, Elise. Things like religions are just instruments after all.』 (Armstrong)

『Doushi, since you are more or less the Royal Head Magician, put some proper thought into your wording.』 (Burkhart)

Due to the honest opinion of Doushi, who doesn't believe in religion at all in a different meaning from me, Burkhart-san rebuked him lightly.

『How about you, Earl-sama?』 (Burkhart)

『It's not like I don't believe in anything at all. Look, I want to pray before a battle like this as well.』 (Wendelin)

It's a kind of 『Even the head of a sardine believes*』, but since I'm usually contributing to the church with donations and concessions, it should be fine if they are useful at times as well. *(T/N: Basically "Even something worthless like the head of a sardine will be seen as something precious if there's a will to believe in it." It's a proverb illustrating the strangeness of religious piety.)*

『Does that mean that I'm inflexible?』 (Elise)

『I don't think that's the case, is it?』

『That's right. If it's a really obstinate person, I think they will forcibly press a religious conversion.』

Ina and Luise, who possess a distanced relation towards the church just like me, comforted Elise.

『Besides, once the war starts, they won't be able to worry about such things.』

『They won't be able to say that they won't heal someone because their religion is different.』

As Wilma and Katharina say, once the battle starts, the magicians and priests

in charge of healing will become very busy.

Swiftly healing the wounded was something indispensable to maintain the military forces. As a matter of fact, at times they will have to consider the healing order.

Assuming two wounded people were carried in front of a certain magician who had mana left for one heal.

One person an ordinary soldier, the other a renown knight.

If the magician gave priority to the knight considering his fighting strength, what would he do if the soldier had a serious wound bringing him close to death?

Although the soldier would end up dying without getting healed, the future casualties would decrease by having the knight return, if one considers the war progress.

That means it was essential to heal the knight and let the soldier die.

『It's no good if we don't request the Earl Mizuho Country to be flexible as well.』

『The other side might not have such leeway, but there will also be cases where people will die if we don't rely on them. That is, if we don't handle this part flexibly.』

『Understood, dear.』 (Elise)

After this conversation, Elise headed to the field sick bay in the rear. Nevertheless, religion is quite bothersome.



“However, war is a cruel thing.”

Since there's the danger of the wounded returning to the frontline after getting healed, it's necessary to kill your opponent without fail in a real war. Something like the previous dispute can't be regarded as anything but a game, but real war ended two hundred years ago.

This situation is in order to not readily turn it into a war between countries.

“For the time being it seems that the enemy army's general is introducing himself.”

Ahead of where Alfons pointed with his chin, there was a fat middle-aged

man, who was riding a beautiful horse and wearing an extravagant armour, and two mounted knights who apparently served as his guards. He made his horse gallop this way, but came to a standstill in front of the trench against horses I created.

“Barbarians who don’t understand the aesthetics of knighthood! Listen well! I’m the Imperial Army’s General Classen who was ordered to liberate the Sorbid Wasteland by His Majesty!”

“Aesthetics, eh... I think that’s useless if you don’t win the war.” (Alfons)

“Humph! That dark female pig’s gutless cousin, huh!?” (Classen)

Being treated as black pig; Therese probably wouldn’t have been very pleased about this.

Talking about aesthetics and such to people, I think you don’t use such slander.

“General Classen, as you don’t work out and only boast about your management abilities, you ended up turning into a white pig.” (Alfons)

The rebel army’s general appears to be a traitor from the imperial army. Going by his tone, he seems to be a friend of Duke Nürnberg, but his provocations were returned with provocations by Alfons.

“Nunu! If you surrender now, we will spare your lives.” (Classen)

His face was bright red out of anger, but somehow he was able to not forget the courtesy before the battle of demanding surrender.

“Just our lives will be spared, ehh...” (Alfons)

“Barbarians who soil our Urquhart race’s right to live! Consider yourself grateful for just being allowed to stay alive!” (Classen)

“That Urquhart race or whatever is just a dream. There’s no such ethnic group after all.” (Alfons)

“You have a retort for everything, don’t you!? Even though you are just a greenhorn!” (Classen)

“You not being able to win an argument against such greenhorn equals to you being incompetent.” (Alfons)

“Acting arrogant though you are just a newcomer!” (Classen)

Intending to provoke, he gets provoked in reverse. General Classen’s face became deep red.

Even so, I’d like him to have a bit better taste in provocation and insult.

“Do you know him?” (Wendelin)

“He’s a famous idiot.” (Alfons)

He was able to become a general because of his good lineage, but without that he seems to be a person that can become at best a corporal.

His family’s home is proud of being a distinguished family from the time before the empire’s foundation. With those family ties, you can consider him as someone who matches well with Duke Nürnberg.

Thanks to Alfons’ explanation, I understood the circumstances of this General Classen.

“We will annihilate you lot!” (Classen)

It’s different if it’s winning against 25.000 with 40.000, but a total annihilation should be impossible.

He’s treated as incompetent by Alfons as he doesn’t understand even that much.

General Classen withdrew to the rear in order to start the battle.

“Won’t it be easier if we kill him with magic?”

“It’s a breach of etiquette. Since the other side is more or less abiding to the rules, let’s overlook him for now.” (Alfons)

I do feel like giving a shit about rules since the moment they caused a rebellion, but let’s follow Alfons’ order here.

A short time later, the infantry stepped forward, and began to advance while placing planks on the trenches I dug up against horse attacks.

“All troops! Start firing!”

Since the rebel army approached the long-distance firing range, Alfons orders for the firing to begin, but all of the released arrows are repelled.

“A~~~ha ha! Did you see my army’s 『Wide-Area Magic Barrier』!?” (Classen)

Even though it's not like he went out himself, General Classen seems to be in a good mood after all of the first arrows were repelled. He's probably making almost all magicians cast a 『Magic Barrier』 and is trying to continue advancing just like that.

“That's because they will be able to reach this field encampment unhurt if all goes well.”

Given that our side's attacks are prevented, it might be possible to get the initiative without any losses if it's done skilfully.

However, there's a trap in this strategy.

Since our side's attacks are stopped by a 『Magic Barrier』, they are unable to attack as well.

“Sometimes there are people who come up with such strategies, but usually it will be put aside as wild delusion, right...?”

Certainly, they won't receive any attacks until the 『Magic Barrier』 isn't removed, but in reverse they aren't able to attack at all. With the harsh consumption of mana, it should become difficult later on .

Since he can't reach such a way of thinking, General Classen is an incompetent person, I guess.

“Even so, this is a chance, isn't it?”

I take out the binoculars from my magic bag and start to search for magicians in the enemy lines.

With the elementary-levelled and intermediate-levelled magicians being spread out equally, the closing-in rebel army is almost evenly covered by the 『Magic Barrier』.

It might be an appropriate way of using magic for the rebel army which is aiming for a first victory due to their superiority in numbers.

Though that is if they don't consider the endurance of the spell.

“The high-levelled classes are...” (Wendelin)

After a few seconds, I discover a magician who possesses mana at the level of Burkhart-san.

Since he's kept back in the centre after all, they seem to have a fixed number of good quality magicians.

“(I can easily defeat them if I go at it from the front, but...)” (Wendelin)

Given that they are the cornerstones of the 『Wide-Area Magic Barrier』 covering the entire large army, they can't act freely.

As proof of that, they are donning the appearance of common soldiers.

They are deliberately masquerading like that in order to prevent getting sniped with magic from our side.

“Wilma.” (Wendelin)

I bring my face close to Wilma's, hand her the binoculars and tell her about the magicians disguising themselves as soldiers.

It's in order to ask her to snipe them.

“Still don't know...” (Wilma)

“It's because not much time has passed after increasing your mana. You will learn it sooner or later.” (Wendelin)

Wilma still hasn't become used to distinguishing magicians. Accordingly I decided to designate the targets for her.

“Y~~~ea. Difficult.” (Wilma)

While saying so, Wilma nocks an iron arrow onto the aforementioned iron bow and snipes the magician.

Usually the arrow would be repelled by the 『Magic Barrier』. She shouldn't be able to shoot a freely-acting high-level magician.

However, currently most of the magicians are busy with deploying the 『Wide-Area Magic Barrier』 in a group effort.

As they are focussing their entire might on that, they shouldn't be able to react to an iron arrow that comes flying at them all of a sudden.

A 『Wide-Area Magic Barrier』 possesses a firm defence power, but naturally it has flaws as well.

It's fine if you break through with offensive power that exceeds its defence power.

The iron arrow fired by Wilma penetrates the 『Wide-Area Magic Barrier』 of the rebel army with a 『Boost』 I piled up onto it and smashed the head of the magician, who disguised himself as soldier, into smithereens.

By its appearance it's a plain spell, but I remembered the sensation of having a

large amount of mana taken away due to penetrating a quite firm 『Magic Barrier』.

The iron arrow, which pierced the target, causes further casualties by piercing several soldiers in the rear.

“Hii!”

Apparently getting confused by the death of a high level magician, the ranks in the surroundings become disordered, but the 『Wide-Area Magic Barrier』 didn't vanish.

It probably means that it won't get erased by the death of one or two magicians.

No matter how splendid a magician, if their actions are tied up, they will end up dying quickly.

One can probably guess the ability of General Classen who doesn't understand such a thing.

“Tsk!” (Burkhart)

Burkhart-san clicks his tongue.

It was planned to give a signal to our allies once the 『Wide-Area Magic Barrier』 vanished and have them fire spells and arrows at the enemy.

“Earl-sama, kill some more.” (Burkhart)

“Roger.” (Wendelin)

To pull down the 『Wide-Area Magic Barrier』, there's no other choice but to kill magicians who possess an advanced level of mana that supports a bigger part of the barrier.

“Ina-san, it's that person.” (Katharina)

“It's difficult to find them because of their disguises.” (Ina)

Katharina seems to also show the results of her special training with Burkhart-san.

Telling her the location of the disguised magician, Ina throws a spear using her improved mana.

Katharina places a 『Boost』 on it as well. It made a hole right in the middle of the magician's torso and he died.

It's definitely been an instant death.

"I feel sorry but he would return after getting healed if it was just an injury. Make sure to definitely kill them." (Burkhart)

Burkhart-san's role was to make sure that Alfons doesn't die no matter what and to give orders to us.

At such times difference in experience will become apparent no matter what. Even Doushi obediently abided to his orders.

"If Erw-boy dies while still unmarried, it will be pitiful." (Burkhart)

"Burkhart-san as well, you can't die because you are a newly-wed." (Erwin)

"Say such things after getting married." (Burkhart)

"I will marry soon." (Erwin)

Erw who's acting as my guard, retorts to Burkhart-san while looking at Haruka who is guarding Katharina, but honestly speaking, I didn't really know whether he has a chance.

"Anyway, target those with a high magic capacity. There's no doubt that it's those who are disguised."

"Hey, when is our turn?" (Luise)

"I'm bored, too." (Armstrong)

"There will definitely be a follow-up attack. We are preserving you two so that you can kill a great number by yourself."

Alfons declared so cool-headedly, however his opinion is correct. Duke Nürnberg, who rose in rebellion, is wrong and Therese, who tries to defeat him, is right, but there are many nobles who have no choice but to lower their heads to Duke Nürnberg who has seized most of the centre and south. That means it's necessary to remove their binding to Duke Nürnberg by achieving a great victory here.

"It will be really troublesome if there's no damage in a war."

Two high-level and eight intermediate-level magicians have already died due to our sniping.

Upon mine or Katharina's instruction, Wilma and Ina snipe, and after adding 『Boost』 to their attacks, they break through the 『Wide-Area Magic Barrier』. It consumes a lot more mana than an unskilful strategic-class attack spell, but if we kill the high-ranking magicians at this point, it will become easier in the future.

“It's a massive loss for the other side.”

“I pity the magicians who die while unable to demonstrate their true strength due to such order.” (Armstrong)

Doushi shows compassion to the killed magicians. If one were to ask why it turned into such a stupid result, it would be because of the incompetence and cowardice of General Classen. Magicians, who can certainly demonstrate effectiveness if allowed to act freely, ended up stuck with the duty of maintaining a 『Wide-Area Magic Barrier』 for the sake of lowering the losses among the soldiers.

“It looks like there were many cases where the usage of magicians influenced the outcome in past wars. There was enormous damage to the winning side if even a single, remaining person with reasonable ability fought to the bitter end in a lost battle.”

Thanks to that, the frequency of wars stayed low. Because the winners suffered great losses as well, it took time to recover. Even for the dispute with Margrave Browig to have taken such shape might have been an act to evade major losses appearing in case it came to a real war.

“We will continue sniping magicians. Wilma. That guy over there.” (Wendelin)

“Got it.” (Wilma)

I'm searching for magicians with the binoculars, but Wilma confirms them easily with her naked eyes since she has a good eyesight.

“Recently, my eyes got even better.” (Wilma)

Given that her body is constantly strengthened due to the Hero Syndrome, her physical ability has grown all the more after her mana increased. A part of that seems to be her eyesight and hearing as well. It's a mysterious phenomenon.

Wilma said that her five senses got sharper.

“The power output has greatly fallen.” (Burkhart)

Burkhart-san confirmed that the 『Wide-Area Magic Barrier』 that spread over the rebel army had weakened quite a bit.

“Wouldn’t one usually cancel it and attack?”

“That’s why he’s an idiot, that General Classen.”

They considerably lowered the distance to us. I think that they should attack after cancelling the 『Wide-Area Magic Barrier』 for the rest of the way.

If the remaining magicians can act freely, they should be able to destroy the walls and palings as well as kill quite a few soldiers.

“It’s probably because their losses are low at the present.”

“Well, they suffered major losses among the magicians though.”

There are few casualties, but the majority of them are magicians. Since he lets his precious magicians die after blocking their movements, General Classen is incompetent after all.

“Duke Nürnberg, he’s capable, isn’t he?” (Ina)

“Who knows.”

Even if he was capable as Ina says, he might have had to compromise quite a bit to obtain the support of the central’s imperial army.

When we were continuing to snipe magicians while brooding over such things, the war situation finally changed.

Suddenly sounds like things bursting were audible all at once from the Earl Mizuho Country’s National Army at the left wing.

“What are those?”

“No way, did they complete 『Magic Guns』?” (Alfons)

I understood from the word 『Magic Guns』 Alfons mentioned while being surprised.

Since the Earl Mizuho Country possesses a Japanese-styled culture range from around the Warring States period to Edo period, they probably developed

something like matchlocks which fire bullets with mana.

“First line change! Second line to the front!”

Once I looked at the rebel army’s left wing confronting Earl Mizuho Country’s national forces, their advance guard was in a state of complete destruction. At the moment the 『Wide-Area Magic Barrier』 became weak thanks to us, they attacked the soldiers and pierced them with bullets that were fired with mana. Moreover, it seems like the shooting interval of the 『Magic Guns』, different from matchlocks, is short.

As it seems to be alright to just put the bullet in the gun barrel with a pre-load style, and since the mana is provided by an embedded magic gem, it’s excelling in its rapid-fire ability more than the gunpowder one.

Because the gun barrel heats up after shooting around five times, they seem to swap with the next relief personnel once that happens.

Due to that highly-efficient new weapon, the rebel army, which was confronted with it all of a sudden, became greatly disturbed.

However, as there hasn’t been any orders for retreat, the rebel army’s left wing continues to advance while pointlessly increasing its casualties.

“Earl-sama, the 『Wide-Area Magic Barrier』 vanished, no?” (Burkhart)

“Yes.” (Wendelin)

They finally cancelled the 『Wide-Area Magic Barrier』 in order to let the remaining magicians move freely.

Burkhart-san was bound to notice that. Once he matched his eyeline with Alfons, a red flag was raised at the central troop headquarters.

Upon the flag signalling the start of our side’s attack, arrows and spells are relentlessly fired at the rebel army which got closer.

With the rebel army starting to retaliate as well, it finally has reached the state of a full-scale mortal battle between both sides.

The rebel army continues to attack and advance to take this battlefield encampment. Our allied forces are trying to prevent that. There seem to be many casualties among the rebel army which is the offensive side, but the other side has still magicians left.

“The seventh watchtower was completely destroyed! There’s a great number

of killed and wounded!”

“Battalion Leader Vogel died in action! Company Commander Linz has taken over command!”

Our allies’ casualties are reported one after the other, but it’s not possible for us to go assist them.

Intermediate-levelled and elementary-levelled magicians have been deployed there in fixed intervals. Due to our side’s sniping, we have the upper hand in quality and number of magicians.

We have to protect the troop headquarters. It’s wrong if we don’t assist in crushing the military forces in front.

We didn’t have any leeway in our first war with battles to the death.

“Earl-sama, don’t use too big spells.” (Burkhart)

“Roger.” (Wendelin)

Creating small-scaled 『Wind Cutters』 and 『Fire Balls』, I fire them at the rebel army’s soldiers who are trying to get across the stone wall one after the other. Though they die by getting burned or torn to pieces, I can’t go easy on them. After all it will be the end after I get killed once we lose.

“We are overall superior, aren’t we?”

Three hours after the attack of the rebel army began, there were countless numbers of enemy soldiers collapsed before our eyes.

I haven’t counted it accurately, but it’s doubtlessly losses reaching into the thousands.

Several hundred casualties appeared among our allies as well, but because of their brute force approach after the number of magicians had decreased on their side as attackers, the rebel army’s losses are enormous.

“Even General Claussen can’t retreat anymore at this point in time, I guess.”

Suddenly a 『Fire Ball』 comes flying in front of my eyes.

They probably tried to turn the tables with a single lucky sniping attack, but its power is low. It’s easily stopped by Burkhart-san.

“It’s that guy.”

“Yes!”

Katharina releases 『Wind Cutters』 aiming at the magician.
The first strike was repelled by his 『Magic Barrier』, however next I fired a bullet with magic, pierced his head and he collapsed.
I should have definitely killed him.

“Is that spell a reproduction of 『Magic Guns』?”

“That’s right.” (Wendelin)

Since I don’t know the structure of a gun and such, I’m only firing a magic bullet that had its front part squashed with mana.
The materials are metals like iron and some tungsten.
Recently I became able to find other metals than iron and copper with 『Detection』, but since I don’t know the methods of using chrome, nickel, bauxite and such, I simply stored them away after using 『Extraction』.
It seems that the power of a gun will rise if you use rifling, but I don’t know whether the magic guns got such contrivance.
Even the other other party likely won’t teach the details of their secret weapon they hid until now that easily.

“I want to learn it as well.” (Katharina)

“It’s a magic that can’t be used for anything but killing people though.”
(Wendelin)

“That might be necessary from now on as well.” (Katharina)

As Katharina says, in front of us there are gross corpses piling up.
Without the rebel army stopping its attack even though they have suffered losses in the thousands, a part of our allies is already piercing the knights and soldiers of the rebel army, who have climbed the stone wall, with spears.

“There’s no end to it, is there?”

“Seems so.”

Even Erw and Haruka borrowed reserve spears from Ina, climbed the stone wall and started to make the enemy soldiers fall off.

“Commanding officer discovered.” (Wilma)

Wilma continues to snipe with her iron bow aiming for commanding officers.

“I wonder, is Elise alright?” (Wendelin)

Unable to go and see her at all, I become worried about Elise who is continuing to treat the injured in the rear.

“Elise-sama is fine because she’s strong.” (Wilma)

“I see.” (Wendelin)

Wilma, who is idolizing her, swept away my worries while using her bow.

“However, it’s strange, you know...”

The rebel army’s offensive lasted for around six hours by now. Close to 10.000 corpses were piled up already. Thanks to that, it has become easier for the enemy army to climb the stone walls. Even though they are overwhelmingly disadvantaged going by the loss ratio, they devotedly attack without stopping.

“That’s simple. It’s because the main force consists of the prince-electors’ feudal armies.”

With their lord being held hostage, they are unable to retreat. Since failure is connected to punishment for their lords, they are unreasonably attempting to take this field encampment even if they have to sacrifice themselves to harm their opponents.

“Is that the reason for General Claussen to act as the supreme commander?”

From his point of view that equals to that of an appointed central noble belonging to the military faction, it doesn’t hurt him at all no matter how many feudal armies of other nobles are run through.

Moreover, although General Claussen is an authority of the imperial army, he’s also an incompetent person.

Duke Nürnberg’s dictatorship will be strengthened by judging him if he fails. If the military forces of the prince-electors are killed, it will be simple to gain total control over their territories.

“Is he making us get rid of the prince-electors’ military forces...?”

The prince-electors themselves are hostages, but since they are in charge on

paper, they will be judged after being forced to take responsibility for the defeat.

It's probably a scenario where their territories will be confiscated and absorbed by Duke Nürnberg.

"That's why they can't retreat at any cost, I suppose."

This mountain of corpses surpassing a 10.000 is the result of that.

A large amount of arrows and spells are fired by both sides. Earl Mizuho Country's national army fires their magic guns continuously.

Our allies' casualties amount to around 1.000, but that's owed to Elise and the others of the healing corps doing their best with us being the defending side. The enemy army suffers increasing damage because they get targeted at the times they try to have their wounded fall back to the rear.

"Will it plunge into a night warfare, I wonder?"

"I'd like to avoid that if possible." (Alfons)

"Why?"

"It might be possible if it's Duke Nürnberg's army, but I want to focus on precaution at night." (Alfons)

Seeing that he was aiming for an usurpation of the imperial throne through a rebellion, it won't be strange for him to have imposed such training on his feudal army, is what Alfons is probably thinking.

To begin with, it seems that Duke Nürnberg's army is famous for being powerful.

"In that case we have to settle it quickly."

"It's necessary to shoot General Classen for that. Can you do that?" (Alfons)

Since their losses are great, General Classen has gone quite far towards the frontline and is urging on the soldiers vigorously as if he has gone mad. However, on both his sides there were two treasured high level magicians. It was difficult to snipe General Classen with magic because they gave their undivided attention to his protection.

They have deployed a firm 『Magic Barrier』 protecting only them and General Classen. It's not possible to break it that easily.

“It’s possible if they use their mana to the degree of running dry, but...”
(Wendelin)

Since one doesn’t know what might happen on the battlefield, you want to preserve a certain extent of mana if possible.

“Sorry, but please do it.” (Alfons)

“Got it. You heard him.” (Wendelin)

“He’s a useless general who is lazing around in the rear!” (Armstrong)

Once I give the signal, Doushi, who threw rocks at the enemy army out of boredom, flings a huge, mana-charged megalith at Classen’s group which was several hundred meters away from us.

“He’s skilful to throw it that far, isn’t he?” (Luise)

“Luise, listen up and hurry!”

“Hitting them isn’t that difficult, but...”

In addition Luise starts to throw stones, though they are not as big as that of Doushi. Ina consecutively throws her reserve spears and Wilma rapidly fires iron arrows.

As their aim is accurate, they reach General Classen’s location one after the other, but all of it ends up getting repelled by the 『Magic Barrier』 cast by his two guarding magicians.

“Katharina!”

“Yes!” (Katharina)

However, those are just decoys.

Immediately following, I fire several bullets with magic while attaching strong 『Boosts』 to them.

Furthermore, matching my timing, Katharina improved them by piling up 『Boosts』 onto them as well.

All of a sudden it’s an impossible stunt, but I believe it to be great that we incidentally practised it before.

The several bullets gain an absurd penetrating force and head towards General Classen’s group.



“It doesn’t how many attacks you pile up, in front of us brothers’s 『Impregnable Fortress』 and 『Solid Wall』!”

“Older Brother! It’s bad!”

No matter how strong the shield, if it’s attacked by an offensive force exceeding its defence, it will break.

Their 『Magic Barrier』 is penetrated at several points by small bullets. They penetrate the two magicians’ and General Classen’s bodies in succession. Moreover, as the bullets have rotation added onto them, they are also acting as dum-dum ammunition used in interpersonal combat.

With a great part of their bodies’ intestines gouged out, the three fell over while vomiting blood.

“General Classen!”

“The Supreme Commander!”

Unrest spreads to the soldiers who were in the vicinity. It propagates like a wave to the entire army.

Even if he was an incompetent Supreme Commander, he was still their Supreme Commander.

Once he was killed, their moral naturally deteriorated.

“Retreat!”

Additionally, weak points appeared due to the enemy army being a mix of several feudal armies which didn’t do combined training until now.

A part of the commanding officers began to retreat on their own volition.

Once that happened, it likely wouldn’t take much time for this flow to spread to their entire army.

“Alfons, I’m out of mana.” (Wendelin)

“I’m wasted as well.” (Katharina)

Katharina and I sit down back to back on the spot.

It’s not going as far as us fainting, but we probably won’t be able to use magic decently anymore.

“You saved us. With this it’s our victory. We will dispatch the pursuit unit!”
(Alfons)

“What’s the danger of an ambush?”

“None. We will also take along magicians who can use 『Detection』.” (Alfons)

“Be careful of 『Hide』 magic.”

Since it’s a war after all, there doesn’t seem to exist graceful behaviour.
Alfons gave the order to pursuit to the knight order he preserved.

“Is pursuit necessary?” (Katharina)

“Yes, it is.”

From the point of view of Katharina who’s aiming to become a noble, she seems to consider the act of pursuing an enemy, who shows their back, as inappropriate for a noble.

“A pursuit is the best way to decrease the enemy numbers. It’s because they have turned their backs on us.”

Besides, if they manage to get away, they will reorganize and come facing us again.

Decreasing the enemy numbers when it’s possible to do so is the very best method to decrease the future losses of our allies.

“Is what I’m saying whitewashing?” (Katharina)

“I think usually it’s fine like that.” (Wendelin)

“It can’t be helped because it’s a war now?” (Katharina)

“If you don’t consider it like that, you won’t be able to kill people, right?”
(Wendelin)

“I guess so...” (Katharina)

We have killed a great numbers of monsters until now, but genuinely killing people in front of us happened after we came to the empire.

We killed soldiers in order to run away from the coup d’état forces and today we have also killed a large number of enemies who have made an onslaught.

At the time of fighting I didn’t think about anything while in a trance, but once I

look at the blood-stained corpses spreading below my eyes, I can't stop trembling at all.

Since even I'm like that, it's probably even more painful for a woman. Before I noticed, I was sitting down while embracing the four of them.

"I'm sorry. It's because of our circumstances." (Alfons)

"It's a job after all. Though it's no good for a mercenary to tremble after seeing corpses."

"No, it seems to be the same for me as well..." (Alfons)

Once I look properly, Alfons' fingers are trembling as well. Among the soldiers in the vicinity there were some who are standing by changing their spears into walking sticks out of exhaustion. There are also some who are calling out to their injured war buddies while crying. The only ones full of spirit are probably the pursuit units which sortied after getting their preparations in order.

"Even that's an empty liveliness. After all there's not a single person who's experienced in real wars."

It's for the sake of obtaining rewards and success in life by raising deeds of arms.

While persuading themselves like this, they departed to the front in high spirits. But, in fact, it's inevitable for everyone to be frightened. People, who love to murder, rarely exist.

"Wend, I will go as well." (Erwin)

"Is it fine?" (Wendelin)

"I still haven't gotten used to horses. I won't go too far." (Erwin)

Even Erw probably wants to obtain deeds of arms here. Because the Earl Baumeister household grew too much, people, who are criticizing Erw for being a man with nothing more than connections, increased as well.

"Please pardon my yet unknown return." (Erwin)

"Take care. Besides, you are also together with Haruka-san." (Wendelin)

“It’s a bloody date, I guess.” (Erwin)

“Don’t say that. Then, I shall head out as well.” (Haruka)

Erw seems to join the pursuit unit of the Earl Mizuho Country’s national forces due to his relation with Haruka.

While holding up his new Mizuho katana that was created for him, he departed to pursue together with the members of the aforementioned 『Battou Unit』. It appears that Haruka is also next to him.

“Earl Baumeister, it’s fine for you to take a break now.”

“Is it really?” (Wendelin)

“For today, that is.”

Only the pursuit units are now participating in the battle. It seems they are now only sending out scouts in case of a night attack by another enemy army and a counterattack by the escaping enemy army.

“Our side will take care of cleaning up the battlefield. There’s no way that we can exhaust Earl Baumeister’s party, who is an effective war potential, with such work.” (Alfons)

“Got it. Shall we go to Elise’s place?” (Wendelin)

I don’t believe that I, who has no mana left, would be useful in any way, but I wanted to see Elise’s face anyway.

Although it might be a victory, I don’t feel oververy good about it.

Entrusting Alfons’ guarding to Burkhart-san, we retired to the rear.

Chapter 86 – Therese-sama appears at the frontline

“Frank! Stay firm!”

“Uuhh... Mother...”

A few hours after the gruesome battle ended, I helped with healing at the field hospital where Elise was at.

Since I had run out of mana, I was forced to recover it to some extent with a nap of several hours. Afterwards I was assigned to relieve the great number of injured by making use of the magic gems I had on hand.

Since I had not practised healing magic overly much due to relying on Elise, there’s no way for me to use all the magic gems.

At any rate, as I ended up giving priority on the healing, there were some among the injured for whom I might have not been in time.

Like this, I now encountered the scene of comrades raising their voices to encourage their friend whose consciousness was hazy.

The youth, who was close in age to me, was struggling against the looming death.

“Earl-sama! Please save Frank!”

“ ... ”

There were very many who I wanted to save, but the mana I recovered by napping had already run out and I had used quite a few of the magic gems as well.

Given that I don’t know what will happen down the road, I was strictly ordered by Alfons to preserve a set amount of magic gems.

It’s regrettable, but we have no other choice but to bet on his life force.

“Sorry, but my mana has...” (Wendelin)

“No way... Frank! Stay strong!”

When I look at the youth about to die any time now, only feelings of guilt are welling up within me.

It’s not just about me being unable to save him, but it would also become unfair

if other wounded wouldn't be saved if I helped him.

What if there was another attack by an enemy army at the moment I used up the magic gems?

Although it was pathetic, I had no other choice but to abandon him ruthlessly. It's a coldhearted calculation with regards to the battlefield.

"Dear..." (Elise)

"I'm sorry." (Wendelin)

Even Elise who stands next to me, has already run out of mana. She exhausted her magic gems and even the mana in the ring I gave her as a present before.

Once I looked properly, her priestess garb was sullied with blood as she was apparently giving her undivided attention to medical treatment.

"Frank! You definitely have spirit!"

"Aah... My deceased mother has..." (Frank)

The seriously wounded youth called Frank appears to have already lost his mother.

Him seeing an illusion of her probably indicates that the time for him to ascend to heaven was drawing near.

His young comrades continue calling out to him, but his consciousness gradually becomes distant.

Frank's death was now around the corner.

"Sorry. If I had been able to use stronger healing magic..." (Katharina)

"No, the magic one can use depends on the individual. It's not your fault, Katharina." (Wendelin)

"Wendelin-san..." (Katharina)

This is simply inevitable since there's suitability and unsuitability. Katharina had run out of mana as well. The best her healing magic can achieve is to heal minor injuries.

"Dear..." (Elise)

"Wendelin-san..." (Katharina)

All three of us were filled with feelings of regret. I had no other means but to simply embrace both their shoulders and console them.

“Mother...” (Frank)

“Frank!”

At the time when I considered it hopeless beyond doubt, that person appeared at the best possible timing.

Though he doesn't look like a protagonist, he's a person who seems to always be present in the middle of the turmoil.

“The injured are here, huh!?” (Armstrong)

Doushi, who showed up, had preserved his mana as a strategic option. Furthermore, although no one asked him to, he participated in the pursuit battle.

“Doushi?” (Wendelin)

“Uncle-sama?” (Elise)

“We will talk later!” (Armstrong)

It's unknown why Doushi participated in the pursuit battle. He vigorously rushed in riding a dosanko horse while holding in one hand the hexagon staff that's often used by people of the Earl Armstrong household, which they obtained from somewhere. Due to the sudden event, Alfons was dumbfounded, and yet, Doushi has succeeded in returning safe and sound. However, his robe was blood-stained making Elise draw back. Hasn't he accumulated stress in various ways because his fighting style, which used three-dimensional movements, was impossible due to the restrictions on movement type spells?

“Youngster! Stay strong!” (Armstrong)

Doushi had learned 『Holy』 healing magic, but he has to embrace the other party for it to show any effect. Doushi resolutely spread out both his arms while being wrapped in bluish-white 『Holy』 light.

“Please hurry (What will it be? Even though it’s a very great deed of him, his appearance is...)” (Wendelin)

“Umm... Please go ahead, uncle-sama.” (Elise)

From the point of view of Elise, who grew up in the church with its prohibition of homosexual love, something like her uncle, she should respect, hugging a young boy is probably a nightmare-like view.

However, this is also for the sake of saving the young boy’s life.

Without thinking about anything unnecessary, she also requested Doushi to heal him.

Once Doushi embraces the young boy while emitting the 『Holy』 bluish-white light from his entire body, the boy’s wounds vanish gradually.

Although it doesn’t work unless he hugs the other party as usual, its effect was exceedingly splendid because of his terrific mana quantity.

“Uuh... Mother.”

The young boy, who was about to die any time soon, had his consciousness slowly return due to the effects of Doushi’s healing.

However, there’s just one pitiful truth.

“Frank-san, as for the mother that’s embracing you...” (Elise)

“Noo~~~! You must not say iit~~~!”

The serious Elise talked about reality, but she can’t be allowed say it in this situation.

“That young boy was saved. Any further than that is...”

“Understood.” (Elise)

Doushi has saved the almost-dead boy with his healing magic.

If seen from the standpoint of church officials like Elise, it’s likely a miracle they would want to record in a book, but going by the impression given by the scene, it’s a view one wants to seal away in one’s memories.

That’s because a muscled old man had hugged a young boy with all his might. I have no doubt that it will be treated as prohibited item by the church, if a record of that is left behind.

“Doushi, if only you could use normal healing magic...”

“Yes...”

Completely discarding the previous sorrow, Elise and I can't leak anything but a dry laughter.

And, even for the young boy Frank who was saved, disaster struck.

“Mother?” (Frank)

“Hmm. I'm not your mother, it's great that you are alive.” (Armstrong)

“...” (Frank)

It's probably natural for the young boy to become speechless. Even though the figure of his deceased mother popped up in his mind at the time when his consciousness was hazy due to being close to death, he is embraced by a hard-faced, bright blue yakuza, an embodiment of muscles, once he opens his eyes.

At the same time Doushi showed the young boy his smile, however the boy doesn't take it by face value since it's Doushi after all.

From his point of view, he might regard Doushi as muscled death god. He stayed stiff for a while.

“Haard~~~! Mother is haaard~~~!” (Frank)

It seems he was unable to endure the reality that befell his own body. He raised an ear-shattering scream.

“Ahahaha! If you are this lively, you are already fine, I guess!” (Armstrong)

“Say, Richter! Konrad! What's this about?” (Frank)

Frank, who recovered from his injuries, asked his nearby friends, but as there was absolutely no way for them to say anything with Doushi in front of them, his friends just lowered their sights.

“You were saved by Doushi-sama.”

Just that brief comment, one of them simply tells him the truth in a low voice.

“Frank, isn't it all fine since you were saved?”

“That's it, lad! As long as you are alive, you can enjoy life for a long time to

come yet!" (Armstrong)

Even the deeply emotional scene gets messed up by Doushi. The saved boy receives compassionate looks from the other wounded.

However, they realize their situation right away.

The matter of them also getting hugged by Doushi right away while screaming soundlessly.

"Doushi, is your mana all right?"

"I have used almost none of it at the pursuit. I simply killed the enemies with this staff after catching up to them from behind." (Armstrong)

"I see..."

Putting aside whether it's right or wrong for a magician to go out for a pursuit to kill the enemy soldiers with a hexagon staff, it was also a fact that many of the injured were saved thanks to Doushi.

Though it's correct to assume that all of them screamed in their minds while being embraced by him.

"Passing away just like that or getting saved by being hugged by Doushi; even though it's natural to choose the latter, it's doubtful on an emotional level, isn't it?"

"The sole salvation is the fact of no feelings of love being involved."
(Katharina)

"Don't mention such cruel thing for no special reason, Katharina-jou-chan."
(Burkhart)

"Dear teacher, I'm already a married woman..." (Katharina)

"Oops, sorry. However, still, how do you feel about getting embraced by him as an adult woman?" (Burkhart)

"I will make sure to not get injured, and even if it happens, I will leave it to Elise-san or Wendelin-san." (Katharina)

"That's an extremely normal reply, isn't it?" (Burkhart)

“Teacher, just what do you want to hear from me?” (Katharina)

The next day after the battle took place, I, Burkhart-san and Katharina continued chatting while repairing and expanding the field encampment. Although the wall was useful for defending against the enemy soldiers; since it turned into a situation where it had an insufficient height due to the corpses piling up on the other side, we were requested to add more height to it by Alfons.

We have also been asked to increase the number and depth of the moats against cavalry units, but that has been scheduled for tomorrow and the days after.

The reason for that is the large quantity of corpses of the enemy army currently scattered there. They are getting buried by the soldiers and hired local residents.

As it's currently winter, the progress of decay is slow, but we can't leave such huge amount of corpses alone forever.

The other magicians, who participated in the battle, dug a hole and after taking a memo of those, whose identity they could affirm, stripped off the usable items and tossed them into the hole.

Scattering oil and burnable things at the end, a magician set the hole on fire to cremate the corpses within.

There's no way that something like dealing with corpses exceeding 10.000 in numbers will finish that easily if you don't decrease their numbers by cremating them.

Also, the act of looking for spoils of war from the corpses; since this is also a part of the reward and war expenditures, it was normally carried out without whitewashing it.

Though it wasn't an overly nice view to behold.

The stench of corpses burning in front of the stone wall that was built around the field encampment is disgusting.

But even this was the reality of a battlefield.

“Even so, I'd like to refrain from joining those corpses by losing.” (Burkhart)

“It's because you are newly-wed, eh?” (Wendelin)

“Me as well as Earl-sama, right? By the way, what about Erw-boy?” (Burkhart)

“He’s on a date, isn’t he?”

Given that the guards were newly arranged by Alfons, there’s no need for Erw and Haruka to devote themselves to guarding that much.

Accordingly, he swiftly immersed himself in training trying to learn katana techniques.

With Haruka in the role as his teacher, she’s training together with him.

“I appreciate your efforts for continuing the pursuit battle.”

With the pursuit carried out by the elites of Mizuho national army’s Battou Unit and Duke Philip household’s feudal army, around 20.000 soldiers of the 40.000 soldiers of the rebel army were turned into corpses.

There were wounded and prisoners as well, but those don’t amount more than 2.000.

It might be because their lords would get executed if they returned after losing and because it might also result in harm towards their families if it’s just them surrendering, but there was an endless number of soldiers who were killed after fighting to the bitter end.

Because our allies had priority in healing, there were many wounded who ended up dying yesterday.

Due to the excessive amount of corpses, everyone was in a state of coping with it while being weary.

“It looks like quite a few of our allies died as well, doesn’t it?”

“Yes.”

The casualties of our allies were 2.567 in total.

If you consider the kill ratio, we have an overwhelming advantage, but this time’s rebel army wasn’t compromised of elites either.

Disposable military forces have caused more than 10% losses to our side.

Duke Nürnberg likely won’t consider his side to be at a disadvantage at all.

“Meaning Alfons-san is greatly troubled?”

“That’s how it is.”

We cannot help it in a real war since we will get killed if we cut corners, but the more soldiers die, the more will the empire’s national power decline.

Even for Therese that's probably an unresolved problem that gives her a headache.

"Because we will have to fight, an expansion of the stone wall is preferable."
(Katharina)

"That's right, isn't it..."

Because we finished the requested repairs and expansion, we withdraw to the rear next and cultivate the wasteland.

That doesn't mean that we are colonisers, but it was for the sake of growing a certain kind of crop.

"Wend!"

"We waited for you."

Ina and Luise, who helped by tilling the wasteland site with magic and planting seeds, show up.

"What kind of seeds are you planting?"

"It's idiot daikon after all."

"This is the actual produce." (Ina)

Ina shows a large turnip with a size to the extent of Sakurajima daikon. (T/N: *The largest variety of daikon on the world*)

Even though it's name is idiot daikon, it actually seems to belong to the family of turnips.

"It looks like this will become fodder for the horses."

Due to its toughness, it's unappetizing if humans eat it, but it easily grows on any kind of wasteland.

A certain extent of water was necessary, but we dealt with this by digging a large quantity of water wells.

It's apparently called idiot daikon because 『Any kind of idiot can grow them』.

"I hear its place of origin is Earl Mizuho Country. It was produced by selective breeding of turnips."

"Aahh, okay."

I quietly listened to Luise's explanation.
Once I hear daikon, I get the urge to eat an oden vendor's pickled daikon radish. Recalling even the combination of whitebait and grilled Pacific saury with grated daikon, I was absorbed in my deliberations how I should try to obtain it from Earl Mizuho Country.

"They will be ready for harvest in two months after sowing the seeds. They are also resilient against cold. They are fine with wastelands, too. Their only flaw is them tasting nastily, I guess?"

There doesn't seem to be any problem with the horses eating it.
After harvesting the idiot daikon in the wastelands, next buckwheat, foxtail millet, barnyard millet and such will be grown by planting seeds in soil with horse dung mixed in.

By doing this gradually, the soil will improve so that wheat can be grown.

"Isn't it possible to cultivate it in the Baumeister Earldom as well?" (Wendelin)

"That seems hopeless. They appear to be weak against heat." (Ina)

Ina, who was planting seeds, replies to my question.

"That's regrettable, I think" (Wendelin)

"Rather than using such roundabout method, I think your way of cultivating new land is much faster, Wend." (Ina)

"No, not at all. Even I don't cultivate new land that fast." (Wendelin)

Since the majority of the soldiers work as farmers to begin with, I think we should leave the colonization to them.

There are also things such as digging wells and constructing roads for me.

"It's not that different from the time when I was in the Baumeister Earldom." (Katharina)

"This can't be helped, though you have to add killing people to it. It looks like this will drag on for a while."

"Yes, it's completely a war of attrition."

We are fighting against opponents who don't consider suddenly losing 40.000 troops as damage.

I guess that's probably because we can't take the gamble of invading the imperial capital to turn the tables in one swoop.

"That's why we are growing feed for the horses, right?"

It's likely for the sake of lowering the burden on the supply. Since something like wheat isn't possible all of a sudden, we are substituting it with idiot daikon.

Even the field encampment is continuing to enlarge its function as a kind of defence fortification.

Piling up wood and stones that were processed by magicians, they were in the middle of expanding the watchtowers and barracks.

"After all there's also a limit to a war of attrition. As expected, it's planned to somehow wrap things up within several months."

At that point Alfons shows up accompanied by Burkhart-san. Burkhart-san has been assigned as constant guard to him as the supreme commander.

"It seems that Therese will deploy the main army here."

"Did she gather allies to some degree?"

"Looks like it. Hey, Alfons-sama."

"With all northern lords and a majority of the northern lords in the east and west, the rest has either declared their neutrality or joined as individuals, right?"

Since the rebellion has split the empire into two factions, all decide whom to follow by judging which side will emerge as winner.

Except for the official stance, it's difficult for the nobles as well since it's no good if they don't truly join one side after deciding the winning side.

Just like in Sekigahara, they will lose their ranks in worst case if they make a mistake in their judgment. *(T/N: Sekigahara is a movie about the end of the Warring States period in Japan)*

For the nobles, it should be quite the painful decision to make as it can result in the disappearance of their household that lasted for several thousand years.

"So, when will they come?"

If she leads the army as supreme commander, that alone will rise the morale of our allies, too.

The degree of danger will go up as well, but it's not like she will be told to swing her sword at the front line.

At this point it's probably necessary for her to appear in the spotlight after resolving herself.

"It seems tomorrow early morning. I hear it's quite the large army."

"Roger."

On that day I wield magic to expand the field encampment. Early morning of the next day, the military forces led by Therese showed up without problems.

"Although it was a defensive battle, making the enemy, who excelled in numbers, flee was definitely a great achievement, Alfons. Here's thy reward."
(Therese)

"Ha!" (Alfons)

Therese, who was dressed in a more luxurious mithril-made chain mail than the one worn by Karla before, directly called out to Alfons who went ahead as her representative, and handed him a bag filled with gold coins.

"There are rewards for others as well, but these will be given afterwards."
(Therese)

"Ha!"

Therese immediately sets up her headquarters in the fortress which was built by stacking up building stones.

Moreover, gathering the lords and retainers there, she starts a simple war council.

"Did we defeat close to 20.000 soldiers? That's a great war progress."
(Therese)

I guess it's natural to raise the morale by first praising them since a battle, where half of the rebel army was killed, is a rare, great war progress. However, it wasn't a situation where it was possible to be delighted without restraint.

“With us being the defending side, the difference in the quality of magicians became apparent.”

Due to Alfons’ remark, the looks of all the important people, including Therese, turn towards us.

“Quite a few of the enemy’s magicians were defeated as well. However, the majority has been those who were employed by the prince-electors’ households.”

Although she had apparently read the report in advance, Therese’s expression was sorrowful.

“The difference in national power between the kingdom and the empire is continuing to increase. Don’t thou agree, Earl Baumeister?” (Therese)

“Who knows? I’m just a mercenary.” (Wendelin)

“No, I’m not blaming thee. I just felt jealous that thou live in Helmut Kingdom.” (Therese)

As expected, Therese didn’t address me as Wendelin as she usually does.

“Yet I only clawed my way up as eighth son of a poor noble.” (Wendelin)

“Thou struggling is a downpour that became a blessed rain for the kingdom. Furthermore, the empire is exhausting its national power in a civil war. There’s no other choice but to make it stop as soon as possible, and to enlarge our national power by including foreign trade as well. It’s truly something that will take much effort.” (Therese)

“In any case, currently I’m just a mercenary.” (Wendelin)

If I raise achievements by participating as Earl Baumeister, it will become troublesome because the problem of rewarding me will appear.

『Is it possible for a single person to hold peerage and territory in both countries?』 Due to that issue that had never happened between both countries since the dawn of history, it will very likely plunge the governments in chaos. I will be quits by simply receiving money as mercenary, but I guess that’s the most fortunate outcome for both sides.

“Anyway, it’s something inconvenient for Duke Nürnberg.” (Therese)

“What was the intention behind sending the previous enemy army of 40.000?” (Erwin)

Erw, who has been training his katana techniques together with Haruka recently, posed an unusually serious question.

I wonder whether he was able to obtain a bit of self-awareness as my retainer?

“(Is he trying to show off his good points to Haruka?)”

Either way, I wanted to ask the same as well.

“Whether it’s winning or losing, both bring profit to Duke Nürnberg.”

If he was able to obtain a victory due to Therese’s preparations being too late, the scales of the two parties confronting each other in the civil war would have likely inclined towards Duke Nürnberg’s side.

It’s not like only the Lan tribe lives in the territories of the northern lords.

He could expect for there to be many people betraying their lords after seeing the difference in power.

“Even if he lost half the numbers due to the defeat, it’s a win for him?”

(Erwin)

“Well, you know, that’s owed to the composition of those 40.000 troops.”

(Wendelin)

I explain my pet theory to Erw.

“They are organized from the troops of all the prince-electors, who are held hostage, and General Classen who possessed authority in the imperial army’s centre although he’s incompetent. No matter how many of them die, it won’t hurt Duke Nürnberg.” (Wendelin)

The troops have been dispatched upon the order of Duke Nürnberg, who has seized the empire’s centre due to the coup d’état, and failed.

If he punishes them after blaming them for the failure of the operation that led to losing their military forces in the end, he can lower the prince-electors’ power without doing anything himself.

“So, the prince-electors, who dispatched the troops, will get executed?”

(Erwin)

“No, going by the information of our spies, General Classen had apparently his rank changed, but the rest has to pay penalties.” (Therese)

The reason why Therese was delayed in coming here is probably because she was busy with the reconstruction of her information network without relying on magic and magic tools.

“It’s because General Classen was killed in action. So the punishments were lenient, you say?”

“The family head and his successor of the Earl household were idiots after all. For Duke Nürnberg it was likely easy to punish them without any hesitation. Or rather, luckily he has also caused the debacle of losing half of the military forces.”

“So, it’s penalties for the other prince-electors’ households?”

“Losing a large amount of the retainers and soldiers who were their backbone, a penalty has been handed out for the operation’s failure in the end. Apparently it has been often the case that the responsibility for defeat is connected to a penalty in the warring era. Since it’s not that much of an injustice, they can’t complain about it either.” (Therese)

At the moment when their family head was taken prisoner, they likely lost the ability to refuse as well.

“So, cracks developed in the framework of the prince-electors’ households because there are also things such as assurances towards those killed in action?”

“I guess it’s convenient for Duke Nürnberg. If they don’t pay up, they will be compelled to compensate with territory and concessions. Formally it will be paid to the imperial government, but its current head is Duke Nürnberg after all.” (Therese)

One might say that it’s a method befitting Duke Nürnberg who is aiming for a centralized authoritarian rule.

“How dirty.”

“It’s just as Erw says, it’s really nasty.”

“Fortunately it looks like the members of the central’s imperial family haven’t been executed.” (Therese)

Since there would be a rebellion by the imperial army and central’s appointed nobles, if he did something like massacring the imperial family, it appears that he has limited it to house arrest at present.

If he advances that centralized authoritarian rule, the probability of them getting executed would get high though.

“Then, none of the prince-electors’ households will become our allies, huh?”

“No, Ansgar-dono, who’s over there, joined our side.” (Therese)

Therese introduces the finely-dressed young man who is next to her.

“I’m the young Duke Ansgar Helgar von Baden. I happened to have heard a lot of your fame, Earl Baumeister.” (Ansgar)

As blonde-haired young man with an age around 20 years, he was a characteristic person with looks that made it apparent that he was a very well-bred young noble.

“Huh? Young Duke Baden-dono, it is?” (Wendelin)

If I remember correctly, his father, Duke Baden, should have run as candidate in the emperor election.

I remember listening to his speech while rubbing my sleepy eyes.

“My father, Duke Baden, and a part of our chief retainers were arrested. However, we haven’t dispatched any soldiers for those 40,000 soldiers’ strong military forces.” (Ansgar)

The Baden Dukedom lies in the north-eastern part of the empire. There was the possibility of being attacked by Therese if they carelessly dispatched soldiers.

“The one who acted lawlessly first was Duke Nürnberg. Even if we temporarily side with him, I’m uneasy about the future. Our Duke Baden household will follow Therese-dono. Father and his chief retainers have to accept becoming the cornerstones of my Baden Dukedom.” (Ansgar)

I guess he’s saying that he will abandon them, but it can’t be helped since

that's not a problem only concerning parent and child either.

If he were unable to make such decision, he won't be able to become the family head of a prince-electoral household, though it might be harsh to say so.

“(However I guess it's wrong to ask him about it...)” (Wendelin)

He will desert his one and only father.

He shouldn't be able to do so calmly.

“The participation of the Duke Baden household will be a great help since it will even out the power balance.” (Therese)

After chatting for a while, a dinner meeting that also served as introduction of the major nobles was held, and Therese explained her plans to everyone at that location.

“There will be a reorganization of the empire's nobles due to this rebellion.” (Therese)

She doesn't announce it formally, but Therese, who opposes the rebel Duke Nürnberg, is a strong contender for becoming the next empress.

Urquhart the 17th, who was elected the other day, likely won't be able to accomplish his duty thanks to his unsightly way of getting captured, even if he's alive and gets rescued.

And, that next empress candidate states that a reorganization of the nobles will take place.

The Duke Nürnberg household, the perpetrators of the rebellion, will naturally lose their rank. In addition there will be some, who will lose their ranks or a part of their territory, and those, who will perish completely in the civil war albeit being influential families.

The territory that will become free in such manner, will be naturally distributed to the winners.

Supporting Therese is a declaration equal to obtaining that privilege.

“(Well, that's only natural, I guess.)”

No matter whether it's a rebellion, people who work for free don't exist in the first place, much less to say about nobles.

“Sure enough I don't know when Duke Nürnberg will come attacking with his

entire army, but that battle will be decisive.” (Therese)

After dinner, the nobles returned to their respective camps. While continuing the expansion of the field encampment and the colonization, we are waiting for Duke Nürnberg’s troops going north. If Duke Nürnberg doesn’t defeat Therese, he won’t be able to unify the empire. He is bound to come north without fail. If the situation changes, the strategy might change as well, but at present that’s the plan.

“So, this is thy house, Wendelin?” (Therese)

“Yes. I built it myself.” (Wendelin)

Since the other nobles were gone after dinner, Therese called me Wendelin once again and furthermore intruded upon my house. So far as it goes, she has an excuse. With it being about confirming the reward for us, it’s plain obvious for anyone to see that it’s just a pretext. The reason is because Burkhart-san left since he has his duty as guard of Alfons and Doushi ended up going out somewhere as well.

“It’s remarkably luxurious.” (Therese)

A mercenary basically pays for his own expenses on the necessities of life. Tentatively we have been given a plot of land by Alfons and piling up building stones, which were quarried from abandoned mines and such, it has become a house with quite the size. For temperature regulation it uses an air-conditioner and something like a heater magic tool instead of a fireplace. It’s also fully equipped with a bath and a kitchen. After the interior design of the house, such as the plastering, was completed carefully, furniture and other magic tools were installed. Therese was apparently astonished by its extravagance.

“Those are magic tools I’ve never seen.” (Therese)

“They are excavated items after all.” (Wendelin)

The air-conditioner and the heater are items we discovered in the Demon

Forest ruins.

“Mine residence has stoves and fireplaces. Even so, it’s still far richer than those of the soldiers. Can I get thou to sell me the magic tools?” (Therese)

“I’m sorry, but I need the permission from the kingdom for that.” (Wendelin)

Although the fortune of the Demon Forest’s magic tools had been bought by the magic tool guild using up a large amount of money, it was expected to take quite some time for them being able to mass produce them.

Even if the items are present as patterns, they are magic tools that can’t be reproduced that easily.

“Good grief. It’s possible that the empire will become at disadvantage regarding magic tools as well.” (Therese)

“How about Earl Mizuho Country?”

“The trend for self-reliance is high over there. They won’t invade, but follow their own path. Once we win in the civil war, I might bind them by making them a prince-electoral household.” (Therese)

There was a possibility that they would be occupied by the empire, but Therese is probably believing that there are benefits in integrating them.

“By the way, there will be a remuneration for thee.” (Therese)

According to the contract, we will basically be paid with money. The workload from killing to construction of the field encampment, well digging, cultivation of fields, healing of the wounded and such has been authorized and recorded by Alfons. Based on the market price, an amount of money will be added to the total sum.

Even at this point in time, it had already become a substantial amount of money.

“Also, there is the license for trading between Earl Mizuho Country and Baumeister Earldom, and...” (Therese)

There’s the permission to take minerals from the abandoned mines located in the Great Sorbid Wastelands.

Of course, since this had been carried out in the past by the magicians of the

empire, I smoothly received the approval to this condition.

“Did thou procure plenty of gold and silver?” (Therese)

“So-so.” (Wendelin)

“So-so? That’s great then.” (Therese)

It’s an advantage to have a lot mana at such times.

After all I can freely extract ore from veins that are impossible to mine with the current technology of the empire with magic, like those located several hundred meters below the abandoned mines.

The amount of gold and silver I collected until now was so much that I wouldn’t be troubled even if wasn’t paid a reward.

“(Certainly, ignorance is bliss. I guess they can’t reach such underground veins anyway.)” (Wendelin)

If they detected it, it would have been mined a long time ago already.

“I have heard from Alfons, but it seems that thou participated actively.”
(Therese)

“More or less.”

“There’s no need to be humble. I have received a report that several high-level magicians were part of the enemy’s front line. They were people said to be as remarkable in the empire as the four brothers some time ago.” (Therese)

I think that I’m an unrefined magician that only copes with firm defence power and mighty emission type spells in battle.

It will still take a long time for me to reach the level of master, I believe.

However, among the empire’s magicians there were many who were more unrefined and inexperienced in handling things impromptu than me who can rely on the fact of having mana.

That’s why I feel like they were crushed one-sidedly by Katharina, Burkhart-san and Doushi without even looking at me.

“The role model of an empire’s magician is Doushi.” (Therese)

“In other words, being specialised in something?” (Wendelin)

“Indeed. I hear that it was said by a renown magician in the old days: If you

set your heart on one thing, that magic will become strong.” (Therese)

I don’t believe that to be wrong.

As a matter of fact, if you settle on one type of magic, the efficiency of mana consumption and its power will rise.

However, there’s no guarantee that you will definitely become powerful by doing that.

If one persists in it to the the degree of Doushi, they might become the strongest, but for a magician like me it’s better to possess a variety of knowledge to handle things on the go. After all the only thing one can say is that it depends on the person themselves though.

“Many magicians will die from now on.” (Therese)

If you go further, all of them will be imperial magicians, if they are killed by us, since it’s a civil war within the empire.

For Therese that’s probably something headache-inducing.

“Even if I lament over it, it’s inevitable. I have to hasten in bringing the civil war quickly to a close and proceed with reinforcing the empire’s national power.” (Therese)

“As first empress?” (Wendelin)

“In this situation, that’s how it will play out. Besides, there’s also the requirement that we can win against Duke Nürnberg.” (Therese)

“I will go at it with the intention of winning. I don’t want to die.” (Wendelin)

Spare me from dying in such civil war.

For that sake I’m even killing people which I don’t actually want to do.

“That’s a sound argument. Returning to the previous talk; there will be a special reward from me for thee who has obtained huge achievements.” (Therese)

“You sleeping with me is not necessary.” (Wendelin)

“Ooh! Wendelin, thou are a coldhearted man. To not even pity me who is bound to inevitably become empress...” (Therese)

“Please look for a husband in your own country.” (Wendelin)

“I agree with Wendelin-sama. Since you are the most likely candidate for becoming the next empress, Therese-sama, you should avoid a scandal with a man who has five wives already.” (Elise)

Opening the bedroom’s door which is located next to the living room where I was talking with Therese, Elise showed up in a negligee.

She likely took offence to Therese’s suggestive seduction once again.

“Elise-dono, huh? Once I become empress, the selection of my husband will become complicated. It will be fine if you lend him to me for just a bit.” (Therese)

“Borrowing a man, I don’t think that your statement is befitting for you, a lady of the empire, at all though, Therese-sama...” (Elise)

“Even if I stick to being unmarried, I still want a child at least. I promise that I will definitely not reveal that it’s Wendelin’s seed.” (Therese)

“That’s sophistry, isn’t it? Won’t you announce it officially without any hesitation depending on the political circumstances?” (Elise)

Therese couldn’t answer Elise’s question.

“Therese-sama, you intend to seek asylum at the time when your defeat in this civil war is set in stone, right?”

What if she had a relation to me at that time, and furthermore was even pregnant with my child?

That child would possess the qualifications to succeed the Earl Baumeister household.

If Therese defected, she would be bound to also gather her retainers and family members. Based on my position, I would have to shelter them.

There should be also many people who will have a successful career by becoming retainers.

And there’s also the possibility that Therese and her faction would begin a political strife towards recapturing her native homeland within the kingdom. Elise’s guess shouldn’t be that far from reality at all.

“(Indeed, doing it with Therese will be more expensive than having sex with any kind of high-class prostitute.)” (Wendelin)

Even if she became empress, there's the possibility that she would diplomatically demand something from the kingdom with the child as excuse. In short, Therese's seduction is that dangerous, I believe.

"Besides,"

Elise continues talking while embracing my back.

I turn my awareness towards the sensation of her breasts that won't lose to Therese's either.

While she's my wife, those are truly splendid.

"Wendelin-sama is busy every night." (Elise)

Once Elise said so, Ina and the others also showed up from the bedroom while wearing negligees.

"Therese-sama, cutting in line isn't very praiseworthy."

"Five people or six people, I think it's the same either way though." (Therese)

"If it's within Helmut Kingdom, it's possible that such thing might happen in the future." (Ina)

Ina expresses her distinct will of refusal towards Therese.

"Therese-sama, creeping at night into Wendelin's bedroom will be impossible since Wilma and me are there." (Luise)

"Right. It would be best if you would narrow down your aim at Alfons or such, Therese-sama."

"Alfons doesn't view me as woman." (Therese)

Due to Wilma's and Luise's surveillance, Therese shouldn't be able to steal into my bedroom at night to make love.

With her strength, no matter how much she struggles, she won't be able to win against Luise and Wilma.

"In that case, how about Duke Baden?"

"That person's first wife is the niece of His Majesty Urquhart the 17th. It will probably be turned down by the other side." (Therese)

It seems that usually there are political marriages between the prince-electors

households and the imperial family.

“Apparently you have various difficulties, but please search within the empire.” (Katharina)

“Katharina, your way of saying it is the cruelest!” (Therese)

“Even if you tell me that. Wendelin-san is busy after all. He has to embrace me to create a successor for my Waigel household.” (Katharina)

No sooner than saying that, Katharina began to move towards the bedroom while pulling my arm.

“Thee, certainly thee are not...” (Therese)

“Yes. We have everyday kept Wendelin-sama company with everyone, but is there something wrong?” (Elise)

“Uuh!” (Therese)

Therese ended up drawing back a bit due to Elise replying with a serious look. Since she has no experience of coping with that, just like Katharina in the past, she probably pulled back instinctively.

“Wendelin, are thou fine doing it every day?” (Therese)

“I’m all right with it.” (Wendelin)

There was also the spell from master, but it’s not like we are actually doing it every day.

In short, it’s important for Elise and the others to not give Therese a chance. There are also many days where we talk until sleep or play games.

“Always with five people?” (Therese)

She has apparently no experience how to deal with it. Therese spoke up with the usual firmness in her voice, but her expression looks like she’s losing her head. She probably can’t endure getting embarrassed in her mind.

“Do you want to join as sixth person, Therese-sama? Five or six people is the same, right?”

Once Elise delivered the finishing blow, Therese reflexively left her seat after

hearing that.

“No... Such a thing is... For my first time, I ask for it to be just the two of us...”
(Therese)

Her tone becomes gradually incoherent. At the end she declared this in a loud voice,

“I will definitely produce a fait accompli when it’s just Wendelin and me!”
(Therese)

Once she goes as far as saying that, she leaves the house as if trying to run away.

“Did we do something slightly pitiful to her?” (Wendelin)

“Dear, if we don’t give at least this much of a clear explanation, a second and third Therese-sama will appear.” (Elise)

“You are right, I guess...” (Wendelin)

Since there’s already the case with Elise’s and the others’ mana increasing, there’s no way that I can carelessly increase the number of wives and lovers.

“Dear, let’s soon go to the bedroom.” (Elise)

“Sure.” (Wendelin)

Even if we go outside, there’s no entertainment with there only being soldiers around. Swiftly secluding ourselves in the bedroom will quicken the recovery of mana and raise the probability of survival.

I think I will pretend that to be the case.

“If I think about it now, it was difficult for Dominique.”

“Most recently I have such impression everyday.”

“Is that some sort of escapism? It’s different, no? For us children are necessary.” (Luise)

“Since it’s a war, it can’t be helped that such emotions arise as well. Father-in-law said so before.” (Wilma)

“Wilma-san, you know it well.” (Katharina)

“Should I erase the evidence on top of the bed with the 『Purification』 spell...?” (Wendelin)

The next morning, while entering the bath together, we chatted with each other as if forgetting about the disastrous scene on top of the bed.

Interlude 25 – Erwin von Armin’s Campaign Diary?

– Erwin’s PoV –

“(She’s an angel! There is an angel!)” (Erwin)

“Troops of Earl Baumeister-sama? We will surrender here.”

“(She’s a beautiful person...) If you have surrendered, we will guarantee you treatment according to our usual customs.”

“I accept. I will make all hands discard their weapons.”

Heading in the direction of the headquarters of Margrave Browig’s army leading an army as ordered by Wend who is our lord, I fell in love for the first time in my life on this day.



The Browig household, which held dissatisfaction towards the presented arbitration draft, made the most prohibited move in this prolonged dispute. Changing their equipment and weapons towards actual combat ones, they attempted a night attack with their entire army.

This night attack has been prevented with an 『Area Stun』 by Wend who is my lord and best friend.

『Isn’t it fine if we blow them away with large-scaled magic?』

『Isn’t it better to keep the losses among the enemy as little as possible while preventing damage to our allies as much as possible?』

As usual, Wend is fussing about weird things. Since the situation has already deteriorated this far, I feel like there won’t be any complaints even if the Browig household’s troops are annihilated, but he chose a method to decrease the losses at the expense of exposing himself to danger.

『If that’s no good, take us and run away, okay?』

『I leave that part to Erw.』

After I met with Wend, it has been a bone dragon, an old dragon, a dragon

golem, nobles and their troops and finally it's an army of 10.000 soldiers. Even though Burkhart-san and Katharina would help him, their contribution amounts to a third of the total.

If you go by military definition, military forces, which have 70% of their soldiers incapable of fighting, don't function.

The achievement of these two might be seen as something like an extra for adding a complete victory to Wend's victory.

『A request to send out soldiers came from Margrave Breithilde-sama. Our Lord is resting, but even then we won't be able to send them out in this situation. It will turn into a post-approval by our Lord, but I think that we should send out soldiers from our side as well.』

Once we put down the three who fainted, Moritz-san makes an appearance. With the night attack by the Browig household ending in failure, the few troops remaining in the rear capitulated immediately.

The majority of their allies, who were at the front, got paralysed all of a sudden and couldn't move anymore.

The few remaining soldiers, who have no commander, shouldn't choose an honourable death by fighting against 5.000 soldiers either.

『Apparently it resulted in the enemy headquarters in the rear being occupied in a hurry.』

Wend and the others used up their mana and fainted, but even during that time the situation keeps moving.

Including a punishment-like meaning for the night attack, Margrave Breithilde-sama has invaded the eastern territories and is deciding the occupation points including things like the troop headquarters and the places where supplies were stored.

Together with Moritz-san, I'm leading a few soldiers towards occupying the enemy's headquarters.

Once we headed towards the headquarters alongside assisting soldiers of Margrave Breithilde's army, there weren't any decent military forces left there. It seems that the Browig army made use of almost its entire numbers in order to make the night attack a success.

“We are the allied forces of the Margrave Breithilde household and the Earl

Baumeister household! Tell the Margrave Browig army to surrender!”

Although we are hastening with the capture and relief of the paralysed Browig army, pretty much around 500 soldiers of the allied forces are facing against around 100 people on the Browig household’s side. The Browig camp has no chance of winning in the first place if they fight us from the front.

“Do you think that we will surrender!? Tomorrow reinforcements will arrive and the situation will turn around once more!”

A middle-aged man, who might be considered the one in charge, shows up from within the Browig army’s headquarters and raises his voice that they definitely won’t capitulate.

I didn’t know whether he’s aware of the news about his allies getting annihilated, but the enemy army is closing in on the troop headquarters. He should understand that they lost, but I guess he’s thinking that he will pile shame on top of shame if he surrenders here without doing anything.

“Erwin-san, I leave it to you.”

“Got it.” (Erwin)

The retainer who is leading Margrave Breithilde’s army, asks me to persuade him.

I don’t have such a skill, but since I’m Wend’s retainer, he apparently plans to prompt him into surrender by recounting what my lord accomplished.

“(I wonder whether it will go smoothly?) Let me tell you in advance, but the entire Browig army was utterly defeated.” (Erwin)

“Don’t spout such lies!”

“Isn’t it possible to recommend your surrender in order to spare the low-numbered military forces inside unless you wish to get annihilated? The Browig army has been destroyed by Earl Baumeister-sama’s magic.” (Erwin)

Since there’s not much of a point even if I decorate my words, I decide to tell him everything in honesty.

It seems unrest is gradually spreading inside the Browig household’s headquarters after hearing my words.

“I believe it to be best for you to surrender quickly. Our lord’s mana will likely recover until your reinforcements arrive.” (Erwin)

“Kuhh... I will consult with Karla-sama...”

Karla-sama; that’s probably about the female proxy supreme commander of the Browig army Wend talked about.

As she seems to be nothing more but a decoration, she wouldn’t be taken along on a night attack after all.

If there was some mistake and she got killed in action, it would likely become a problem.

“(Which reminds me, Wend mentioned that she’s a beauty, didn’t he?)” (Erwin)

Be that as it may, 『A sheltered noble daughter who is only beautiful is, well...』 I think.

I understood after being taken along to such establishments by Burkhart-san once I became an adult.

There’s a constant number of beautiful women, but there are only few women who I want to spend my life with.

Because Wend has his position, it’s probably difficult for him, but I thought that I’d like to be pardoned from marrying for a while.

But then again there’s the compulsory marriage interview meeting once this dispute ends.

Will there really be a good woman there, I wonder?

When I was pondering about such stupid things, it was decided that we will receive the capitulation from Karla-jou whom I considered to be a decoration of Browig’s camp.

It seems she’s a woman who has more heart than I thought.

“(Wend, is she really a beautiful woman?)” (Erwin)

As I’m thinking that, Karla-jou shows up.

As expected of the daughter of a high-ranking noble; she seems to be tinged with a nimbus by dressing her body with mithril-made equipment.

“I’m the Proxy Supreme Commander of the Browig army, Karla von Browig. Since we are going to surrender, I’d like to request a lenient treatment of the

soldiers. By the way..." (Karla)

"..." (Erwin)

Seeing her face, I receive a shock.

I fell in love in an instant with the beauty of Karla-jou who came out of the headquarters.



"It has been decided that we will take care of Karla-san." (Wendelin)

"Because there are women among us?" (Erwin)

"That's correct. Haa... War is really troublesome, you know?" (Wendelin)

Once we sent back Karla-jou's group and return after obtaining military gains by capturing goods storages of the Browig household's side in addition, Wend sighed.

He seems to be thinking that our troubles increased by taking care of Karla-jou with the end of the situation that turned from a dispute into a war not in sight.

"(However, that's convenient for me!)" (Erwin)

Since I also serve as Wend's bodyguard, there's nothing strange about me getting in contact with her.

Karla-jou's care is bound to be taken care of by Elise and the other girls.

In that case the chances for her to get in touch with Wend will increase and that also means that the opportunities for her to get in contact with me as his guard will increase as well.

"I will serve as Wend-sama's personal bodyguard. Erw, you will be in charge of guarding the vicinity and interior including Elise and the others since we are short on hands." (Wilma)

"Eh?" (Erwin)

Just when I was looking forward to it, I'm immediately informed about a change in my work schedule by Wilma.

"My elder brother is busy with administration and supervision of the encampment." (Wilma)

"That's right, isn't it...?" (Erwin)

Since a messenger still hasn't been sent by the Browig household's side, Margrave Breithilde decided to enlarge the size of the protective occupation. Though additional reinforcements have arrived as well, it seems that Moritz-san is busy after being assigned too many tasks.

Even I was placed as a person in charge of the troop guarding headquarters.

“(It’s fine. I will still be able to stay at Karla-san’s side. I can talk with her in my free time.)” (Erwin)

“Erw, why are you grinning?” (Wilma)

“No particular reason...” (Erwin)

Wilma has a somehow sharp intuition.

Since it would be embarrassing if my feelings towards Karla-san were noticed at this point in time, I reset my expression right away and started to devote myself to my guard work.

“(What was thaaaaat~~~! Karla-san as a wife of Weeend~~~!)” (Erwin)

I never received such a shock in my entire life.

『Erwin-san, you are quite skilled at archery, aren't you?』 (Karla)

『Same as my lord, it's the experience of a rural noble.』 (Erwin)

A few days after Karla-jou came to us, I was at the peak of happiness. Although I had my job as guard, I was able to receive coaching from Karla-san who is an expert in archery in my free time.

I have her teach me archery while chatting about various things with her.

Moreover, she is very skilled at teaching as well.

She is giving me advice how to prepare and nock an arrow into the bow as well as how to support it with my hands, but she has a very floral scent.

It was the joy of a slightly perverted fetish, but it seems it's the same for Wend as well.

『I'm envious of you, Erwin-san, since I'm completely hopeless in swordsmanship.』 (Karla)

『Though I'm jealous of you, Karla-sama, who is a master in one art.』 (Erwin)

『Erwin-san, there's no need to attach -sama to my name. Although I'm a

daughter of the Browig household, I was simply the daughter of a poor noble until one year ago.』 (Karla)

She, who was a forgotten daughter, was summoned due to Margrave Browig's one-sided convenience.

That's why her attachment to the Browig household is weak.

And yet her handling of their headquarters was splendid.

She's not only beautiful.

Another beauty existed in her as well.

『Today's meal was prepared by me.』 (Karla)

『You are good at cooking.』

『Since I was a freeloader at my mother's home in the capital, I know a bit of cooking.』 (Karla)

『No, not at all. It's delicious.』

The meal prepared by Karla-san was tasty.

Since even that picky eater Wend said that it was delicious, I think that's quite the achievement.

She should be almost equal to Elise.

『Erwin-san, I fixed the part that became loose on these clothes.』 (Karla)

Even though it would have been fine even if she didn't do such things as she was a guest of honour, albeit as prisoner, Karla-san gallantly worked together with Elise and the others.

『I enjoy working while chatting with Elise-san and the others.』 (Karla)

『(She's an angel! Seriously, an angel!)』 (Erwin)

Undoubtedly she will be the best wife once she becomes one, I think. However, the wall of social status exists for the current me and Karla-san. I'm Wend's retainer and Karla-san is the youngest daughter of Margrave Browig.

Moreover, at the location of the arbitration negotiations, which finally resumed, both of the two successor candidates of the Browig household schemed to push Karla-san into becoming Wend's wife.

That actually throws my heart in great turmoil.

“Heey... Wend?”

“Will you accept her? Even after Margrave Breithilde, Roderich and the retainers below heard about it; none of them supported it!”

It was obvious that the nobles and the newly hired retainers, who economically profit from the development of the Savage Lands as well, were targeting a share of the enticing cake.

“This pointless troop dispatch happened because of the instigation of a rebellion at my native home. It would be the best to get financially in the black by charging them with as much ransom as possible.”

It looks like Wend never wants to get involved with the Browig household again.

“That’s certainly true, isn’t it? Even the numbers we are providing now are probably a hard blow to the Baumeister Earldom.” (Klaus)

“After all the rebellion’s mastermind says so.” (Wendelin)

“No, no, Wendelin-sama. It’s appropriate to describe me as the one in charge of executing it.” (Klaus)

Wend, who became a noble, shouldn’t want to take Karla-san as his wife going by his personal feelings.

He is saying so himself as well. There shouldn’t be any mistake in that.

『If it didn’t include any ties of obligation, she would be the ideal woman though.』 (Wendelin)

That was his evaluation. I feel slightly uneasy though.

However, that old man Klaus, who can easily ward off Wend’s sarcasm, is terrifying.

Such a demon-like geezer didn’t exist in my parent’s home.

He definitely made a mistake in the place he was born at.

“Erwin-dono, are you worried about something?” (Klaus)

Moreover, this old geezer.

It seems he noticed my feelings about Karla-san.

He immediately sounds me out.

“There are no worries here.” (Erwin)

“Depending on the progress of the arbitration negotiations, the condition that Wendelin-sama marries Karla-sama might once again...” (Klaus)

“Eeh!?” (Erwin)

I end up raising my voice in surprise due to Klaus’ sudden revelation.

“You are young. Erwin-dono, I think it would be better if you kept in mind to hide your emotions a bit. Though there’s no need to hurry with it as such things come with experience...” (Klaus)

This geezer is a demon after all.

As it was exposed anyway, I honestly talked about my feelings while thinking that I might as well inform Wend about it, too.

“A love across social standings? Unfortunately, as I don’t have any experience in such matters...” (Klaus)

“Now that you mention it, I haven’t heard you talk about your wife, have I, Klaus?”

“She died young from disease. As a former second son, I wasn’t in the position to allow me succeeding the village headship. I believe that you’ve heard that, but...” (Klaus)

It seems that even Klaus-san had a fiancée.

“She was the second daughter of a nearby farm family, my childhood friend. Since both of us were fine with being poor, we wanted to start a family no matter what...” (Klaus)

However, with the sudden death of his father and elder brother, it was decided that Klaus-san would become the village headman.

“Once that became a reality, the surroundings started saying 『It’s necessary to get an adequate wife for the new village headman Klaus-san』 or such. I didn’t want to give up on Marta at any cost.” (Klaus)

It seems that he couldn’t yield on just that, faced down the opposition of the

surroundings and took his childhood friend as wife.

“However, that put a burden on her...” (Klaus)

Receiving pressure in the form of 『Is the second daughter of an ordinary farm family really suitable as wife of the village headman?』 by the surroundings, she ended up dying from illness while their children were still very young.

“I might have wronged her. But, I was told 『I was happy』 by Marta on her sickbed. She might have said it out of consideration, but those words were enough for me.” (Klaus)

After that he persisted in staying single without following the surrounding's recommendation of taking a second wife.

Usually a village headman will take a second wife right away if his first wife dies. Him not having done that is probably because Klaus-san stuck to his own principles.

Because there's no doubt that this damaged the honour of Wend's father who recommended it, I can understand that those two are on bad terms with each other.

“My experience might not be very helpful. A love with a difference in social status between the partners. That will work if you have for example assets or if you become a noble by developing a territory by yourself...” (Klaus)

Although I thought about that as well, I considered it unnecessary after seeing Wend.

Rather than becoming a noble, I feel more at ease with being employed.

“Besides, during that time someone else will probably be chosen as Karla-san's husband.”

“That's right, isn't it? In that case, think about it from the other way around.”

“The other way around?”

“Karla-san's value has to be lowered.”

As youngest daughter of the Browig household, it's normal for Karla-san with her current social standing to be married to the family head or successor of at least a Baron household.

“However, that means it’s impossible for her to become the first wife of Wendelin-sama. It would be different if she were the first or second daughter though.”

If she marries Wend just like that, she will likely take the fourth rank behind Katharina in the hierarchy.

“There’s no point to even talk about Elise-sama. If she demanded the position of first wife, criticism would flood the Browig household. They might even end up making an enemy out of the church. Second rank is impossible too, if you consider the social standing of Wilma-sama’s father-in-law-sama. Since Katharina-sama herself holds the title of an honorary Baroness, there would be an absurd amount of reproaches if she suddenly overtake her.” (Klaus)

“In that case, it’s fourth rank?” (Erwin)

“If that happens, it will anger Margrave Breithilde-sama who sent in Luise-sama and Ina-sama. Having said that, the Browig household won’t be able to approve of her becoming the lowest rank or such either.” (Klaus)

“It was an impossible arrangement from the beginning, I suppose.” (Erwin)

“That’s how it is.”

The ranking of the wives is a troublesome matter, however, as fellow related parties, we talk about it in a serious manner.

“If they don’t understand that, the Browig household is going to have a bitter future ahead, no matter which of the two succeeds the family. I guess the idling state will continue for a while.”

Klaus-san had a truthfully pessimistic view of the Browig household’s future.

“I understand that, but what can I do in that case?” (Erwin)

“Even at the present time it will be harsh for Karla-sama to become Wendelin-sama’s wife. So how about cornering her even more?” (Klaus)

He’s saying that since she’s the youngest daughter, the hurdle ahead of marrying should be lowered.

“You are an unmarried chief retainer who’s entrusted with guard duty and who is Wendelin-sama’s close friend. Well, I wonder how the Browig household

will think about it then.” (Klaus)

Even if they can't push her into becoming Wend's wife, it might work if she becomes my wife.

Moreover, it should also be difficult to complain about it if she becomes my first wife.

“It will also become possible to form a relationship with the Earl Baumeister household. Well, it actually depends on Wendelin-sama to decide what kind of relationship it will turn out to be though.” (Klaus)

Sooner or later there might be people that pop up who think that it will be troublesome if there's yet another sudden outburst by the Browig household after they aren't given any concessions at all.

It will probably be convenient one way or the other if there's a connection at the time of them being given some concessions.

“If she becomes your wife, Erwin-dono, it will become easy to control that part. If it gets inconvenient, it will be possible to hinder their movements with Wendelin-sama's authority.” (Klaus)

It means there's also the choice of not giving them anything by him saying 『She's not my wife after all』.

“I got that, but will the Browig household get cornered any further, I wonder?” (Erwin)

As of yet they are still resisting pointlessly. Eventually they might become desperate and carry out an assault with their entire army.

“If it's about that matter, you have probably heard from Katharina-sama, haven't you?” (Klaus)

“About Herthania Valley?” (Erwin)

It's a treasure box of resources, but it's a monster domain where it's impossible to mine as it's protected by propagating rock golems. From the Browig household's point of view, it's a bad property, but it will likely cause a big shock to them, if Wend and the others end up liberating it after receiving that place.

“We should be able to get back something like a slight reduction of the reconciliation money in an instant.”

If that happens, the Browig household will be cornered all the more. They will officially transfer it to the Earl Baumeister household at the negotiation and there’s also a governmental official, who came from the capital, there as witness.

If they say something like 『Since it was liberated, those terms are void after all』, they will get blamed with 『Can’t the Browig household even keep a set arbitration draft?』

“At the current point in time, the family where Karla-sama will marry into is still uncertain. The circumstances won’t shift that easily either.” (Klaus)

“What about me then?” (Erwin)

“You have to devote all your power into the liberation of the Herthania Valley.” (Klaus)

Right after that the transfer of the Herthania Valley to the Earl Baumeister household was set in stone.

At the same time of a reduction in the reconciliation money, it allowed the Earl Baumeister household to finish the arbitration negotiations first.

I thought that the Browig household wouldn’t hand it over that easily, but the losses added up quite a bit for their side after they attempted the liberation of the Herthania Valley several times in the past.

As expected they probably estimated that the liberation would be impossible for Wend as well.

In my opinion it’s an action equal of having transferred a wonderful concession to Wend for cheap.

It might be impossible for just Wend, but that guy has several magician acquaintances.

“Well then, I guess I will get in contact with Doushi.” (Wendelin)

“You are going to call Doushi as well?” (Erwin)

“His treatment will be conform to that of an adventurer.” (Wendelin)

Since it would be troublesome to split the concessions if he called him as

noble, Wend decided to call Doushi as an adventurer.

It seems he will pay all the rewards with the money on hand, if we succeed in the liberation of Herthania Valley.

“It’s just because it’s you, Wend, that such absurdity is possible.”

Watching Wend count the platinum coins he will hand over as reward, I agree with that statement right away.

The raid into Herthania Valley will be carried out by Wend, Doushi, Burkhardt-san, Katharina and Luise.

If one looks at the line-up, it becomes obvious. He apparently intends to storm in from the sky by making use of 『Flight』.

“We will ignore the grounded beast-type rock golems from the very beginning. Those will be entrusted to the diversion units. I leave the vanguard of the diversion units to you, Erw.” (Wendelin)

“Please do so.” (Erwin)

If I do my best here causing the Earl Baumeister household to grow again, the Browig household might lower the requirements to marry Karla-san.

I didn’t know whether what Klaus has said would actually work out, but currently I have nothing else to depend on.

Moving to the actual site, Herthania Valley, we promptly enter the domain and take on the rock golems which came to intercept.

Their strength is slightly less than ordinary wolves, but since they are made out of rock, their defence is high.

I cut down three of them, but ended up having to repair and sharpen my sword. Inducing an exhaustion of their opponents with numbers is probably the aim of these golems.

“Erwin-san, your skill in swordsmanship is magnificent.” (Karla)

I was praised by Karla-san for that.

When I was praised by her, I was glad from the bottom of my heart that I seriously trained my swordsmanship.

“Erwin, Karla-san will support you as well.” (Moritz)

Moritz told me that after we started the diversion job of the Herthania Valley

liberation operation.

Once I look back, Karla-san is waving her hand.

“(This is my chance to show my manliness!)” (Erwin)

I cut down the golems with the orichalcum-made sword I bought for 20 million cents from the reward for the battle with that dragon golem.

As expected of orichalcum, the rock golems are cut apart like paper. It’s something that caused my evaluation to go up as well.

“You have an amazing sword there.”

“I bought it with the reward I got as an adventurer.” (Erwin)

“Cutting that many golems, there’s no a single chip on the blade... I will leave the lead to you, okay?”

“Yes!” (Erwin)

While Wend’s group is targeting the boss of Herthania Valley, the Rock Gigant Golem, I continue to wield my sword.

If I do my best here, Karla-san is bound to notice my feelings.

“Finished, huh...?”

At the moment I had cut down many golems, a thunderous roar resounds in Herthania Valley’s ground and an earthquake occurs.

It seems Wend and the others reached the objective.

Alongside the destruction of the domain’s boss, the Rock Gigantic Golem, all the manipulated golems returned to simple piles of rock.

“Erwin-san, even as adventurer you are first-class, aren’t you?” (Karla)

As result of moving to the encampment together with Elise after the golems had been annihilated, Karla shows up next to me.

Karla-san called out to me as the very first.

“I’m Wend’s extra though.” (Erwin)

“Earl Baumeister-sama is quite the special person, thus he counts as an exception. I believe that you are amazing as well, Erwin-san.” (Karla)

“(I did it! She said that I’m amazing!)” (Erwin)

After the liberation of Herthania Valley, we collected the ores and magic stones from the remains of the golems while moving to the troop headquarters and confirmed the veins of ores.

We have to try to make them into money swiftly while at the same time taking measures against thieves scheming to steal them.

I was quite busy as well, but I was still able to talk with Karla-san often.

“Though they might get angry if I say such stuff, but I really don’t want to stay at the Browig household.” (Karla)

“I understand your sentiments. I’m in a state of having mostly broken off relations with my family’s home.” (Erwin)

Karla-san hates the Browig household that doesn’t do anything but toying with her life.

I also had a mountain of things I wanted to tell my family’s home.

At the time when I became an adventurer, I was treated as being halfway disinherited and discarded by my father and elder brothers.

Being only given the least amount of money to support my independence, I was told 『You don’t have to return home anymore』.

Since my home was a slightly bigger Knight household than Wend’s, there was no place for me as the fifth son.

Before that, during my childhood, the others had an attitude of it being natural to steal the spoil I had caught myself with troubles. It made me wonder what the others are thinking.

I believed that my father and the others would hinder me even in saving money after becoming independent.

Exploiting a minor’s fruits of labour; just what were they thinking?

However, they received their punishment for that.

Once they learned of the fact that I had become a chief retainer of the Earl Baumeister household as Wend’s close friend, my home sent a letter all of a sudden.

『What kind of family status as retainer can you get Stoffel and Wielan?』

When I got this letter, I didn’t understand its meaning at first.

Even though they severed the connections, they sent a letter as if it was obvious for me to take care of my elder brothers government service once they

knew about me having a connection with my best friend, the family head. I was unable to do much more than being dumbfounded due to the overwhelming shock.

『I'm only disgusted, I guess.』

『These Stoffel and Wielan are?』

『my third and fourth elder brother.』 (Erwin)

All five of us had the same mother, but our relationship as brothers isn't any good.

Since it was a set-up where the higher elder brother exploited and oppressed those below, my third and fourth elder brothers, who were squeezed dry by my first and second elder brothers, chose me, who was the bottommost, as target. Hearing it from other guys with the same circumstances at the adventurer prep school, my family seems to nominate for quite the cruel category.

『Because of that, it's fine to ignore them.』 (Erwin)

『Won't it be bad if you don't consider it somewhat?』

I was warned to pay attention to their needs by Margrave Breithilde-sama, but once I explained the situation, he could agree with me.

『That's a bit terrible after all. No one is talking about good treatment, but it's at least common sense to not become a nuisance.』

Them hindering me to save money for my independence is because they are believing that it doesn't matter even if I die a dog's death after leaving home.

『The fifth son, whom they didn't mind to die a dog's death, became independent. I think it's plenty with that.』

『Yes, it is.』

After that talk I decided to not give my family's home any favourable treatment.

Once I told them that, they sent me yet another letter. It contained excuses such as 『We were strict to imitate lions who cast down the children into a ravine』 or 『It was inevitable since you were excellent』, but I naturally ignored them.

Moreover this matter was apparently leaked to Margrave Holmer who controls the west.

Margrave Holmer apparently thought that he would be able to get a slightly better treatment due to his connection with me.

However, actually he wasn't able to get anything but an ordinary correspondence.

It's not like one gets excluded like in the east, but my family's home apparently got treated coldly after he learned of the circumstances with the truth which was contrary to his expectations.

『If my mother was alive, I might have considered it a bit.』 (Erwin)

『Your mother?』

The only one who covered up for me was mother, but she ended up dying to illness when I was 11 years old.

I don't have any obligation to fulfil for that home anymore.

『Is that so...? My mother is still alive. Only that much might be a blessing.』

Reaching the point of talking about such matters, Mine and Karla-san's relationship should have deepened quite a bit.

Wend hurriedly furthers the defence and development of the liberated Herthania Valley. Due to his astounding speed, the Browig household can't do anything with its successor candidates being bound to the location of the arbitration negotiations.

“We captured several guys who seem to be spies of unknown affiliation.”

“Unknown affiliation, it's probably impossible for it to be anyone but the Browig household.”

“No matter from where those spies have come, the current Herthania Valley is in a semi-wartime state.”

It is pitiful, but spies will be executed once caught.

It's a peaceful epoch, but it's normal for fellow nobles, who are on bad terms with each other, to dispatch spies to their opponent. If they are caught, they will be killed.

“It's especially bad if they are caught by the royal army who has come as

reinforcement.”

There are sometimes cases where they are released secretly after negotiations behind closed doors, but if they are caught by the royal army that operates in accordance with the laws, they are beheaded right away. Even if it's the Browig household; since they have arbitrarily sent in spies to the Herthania Valley which has become the Earl Baumeister household's possession, there's no way for them to file a complaint. They pointlessly wasted trained spies.

“Because they have no leader, the ranks are probably in disorder.” (Karla)

It's likely just as Karla-san said.

If they wanted to obtain intelligence, they should have send in spies in a far more systematic manner.

“After all I have no other choice but to pave my own path by myself...” (Karla)
Several days after the liberation of Herthania Valley, Karla-san revealed that to me.

“Pave your path by yourself?” (Erwin)

“Yes. I want to be omitted from the family register of the Browig household. I want to live by my own strength in a position that has no fetters binding me down.” (Karla)

If you consider her archery skill, it's possible going by her ability, but the probability of those two elder brothers of her letting go of her as piece for a political marriage is low.

Just how the hell does Karla-san want to accomplish that?

“There's my uncle, who ranks third in the succession order, in the Browig household.” (Karla)

She gave Wend information as advice.

There's the youngest brother, who's close to thirty years old, of the Browig household's family head who died just recently.

It would be best to aim for an early conclusion of the dispute by making this man succeed the Browig household, is what she says.

“Karla-san, you will get him to remove you from the Browig's family register?”

(Erwin)

“There’s no other way than that.” (Karla)

“I see. That’s a good idea.” (Erwin)

She will become the daughter of the poor knight household which is her mother’s home, and stop being the daughter of the Margrave Browig household.

If this happens, the freedom of her actions will spread as well.

“(If I consider it from the standpoint of family status, she will match with me. Isn’t that a splendid plan?) Klaus-san.” (Erwin)

“It’s not like I told you that with absolute confidence, but Karla-sama is considerably...” (Klaus)

Klaus-san seems to be thinking that Karla-san is much smarter than he expected.

“A beautiful, wise wife. It’s a wonderful chance, isn’t it?” (Erwin)

“Haa, I guess so...” (Klaus)

I’m slightly worried about Klaus’ tone, but currently our first priority is to accomplish the previous plan.

I enter the Browig territory as a guard of Wend.

And then the Browig household inaugurated the third succession candidate as new family head and accepted the arbitration draft because of Wend’s retaliation.

The chief retainers, who commanded the night attack, were hung and their households lost their rank as well. In addition there were also many households which collapsed due to the reduction of their wages.

Almost all of the predecessor’s family was sent off to the capital. They ended up losing their authority after being given a Knight peerage as a substitute for the dismissal wage.

Although they just reap what they sowed, that’s what happens after angering Wend.

That guy won’t do such a thing unless there’s harm to himself.

“It finally came to an end.” (Karla)

“Yes.”

After the end of the dispute, Karla-san succeeded in getting removed from the Browig’s family register.

Once I ask her about her plans from here on out, it appears that she wants to inform her mother, who’s living in the capital, first.

“Afterwards I will earn money for living together for a while, I guess.” (Karla)

“Earning money for living together?” (Erwin)

“Yes. I’m getting married.” (Karla)

“Is there such a person? What kind of person is he?” (Erwin)

I receive a shock as if being hit hard with a blunt weapon due to the impact of reality, but Once she begins to talk about her partners traits next, I’m gradually getting overwhelmed by happiness.

“He is one year younger and our romance started with me teaching him archery...” (Karla)

Even after hearing his other traits, I can’t think anything but this being definitely about me.

“(In other words, this is...)” (Erwin)

It’s a pattern that resembles quite well I read about in a romantic story I saw while indifferently flipping through the pages of a book before. It’s actually about the woman proposing to the main character after rejecting him once by saying 『I’m getting married』 to the main character.

No, it’s completely the same situation.

『If it’s women, they love such stories.』 (Erwin)

『Do you have any complaints about that?』 (Ina)

I ended up saying something bad to Ina who’s the owner of the book. The current me liked such story very much.

“I want to receive permission from my mother in the capital. I also think that I want to live us together after things calm down after the marriage.” (Karla)

“That’s nice, I think (Victory! I won!)” (Erwin)

Yesterday I refused after being asked 『Would it be better for me to order her to marry you?』 by Wend, but with this it's alright now.
Since I will get married at long last, it's not good for mutual love for it to be out of compulsion by my lord.
After all she has actually chosen me.

“After I finish my preparations in the capital, I will come to Baulburg for greetings.” (Karla)

“Got it.” (Erwin)

Karla-san went back to the capital and I returned to my normal life while looking forward to her revisit.

“Erwin, you are in high spirits, aren't you?” (Thomas)

“Really?” (Erwin)

Just as pointed out by Thomas-san, I'm cheerful.
Even so, as I don't make any mistakes in my work, there's shouldn't be any particular problem with that.

“Are you alright?” (Katharina)

“I don't know what you are worried about, Katharina, but I'm in perfect form.” (Erwin)

Once we got a message from Karla-san that she will arrive in Baulburg tomorrow, my tension rose right away.

Katharina was worried about me while inclining her head to the side, but something like her misdirected concern has absolutely no influence on the current me.

And then, on the next day, when I was waiting in front of the port one hour before her arrival while paying attention, Karla-san showed up from the magic airship that landed.

She wore a simple one piece often worn by daughters of low-ranking nobles and not the expensive attire as well as the mithril-made armour she wore at the time when I met her for the first time.

Even so, her beauty doesn't wane at all.

She was my angel after all.

“It’s been a while, Erwin-san.” (Karla)

“Long time no see, Karla-san.” (Erwin)

Having our long-awaited reunion, my heart is overflowing with joy.
She came to this place in order to marry me.
With only that I welcomed the biggest delight of my life.

“Let me introduce my fiancé.” (Karla)

“(You are still continuing the story? Karla-san, are you unexpectedly a romanticist?)” (Erwin)

That means, after it becomes evident that her partner is me, both of us will hug and then share a kiss.
Even though it’s something that is a mere few seconds away, I can’t help looking forward to it.
Even so, I indulged in the feelings of pleasure without holding back until that moment.



“... (Huh? What’s this about?)” (Erwin)

Even though that should have happened, I was left standing in front of the port by myself.
I don’t know why, but Karla-san introduced the man, who has quite the similar air about him as me, behind her as her fiancé.
Moreover, he appears to be an outstanding talent who won the championship in the archery division of the martial arts tournament.
Being recognised for his skill, he entered governmental service for the Margrave Holmer household as archery instructor. At the same time as having their honeymoon as married couple, they will hunt and gather together in the Demon Forest.

『I was treated very well by Erwin-san.』

『Congratulations.』

Somehow mustering my willpower, I congratulate them, but this was my limit.
I’d like to be praised for being able to say just that.

“Hey, Erw.” (Wendelin)

“Wend, leave him alone.” (Ina)

“But, Ina.” (Wendelin)

“If you touch him now, he will collapse.” (Ina)

Wend and Ina are talking about something, but I can't hear them well.
Rather, why did it turn out like that?

Did I do something wrong?

It went very smoothly with Karla-san.

Since Wend held back and didn't talk with her overly much except during work and archery training, I was the closest to her besides the female camp.

“(A friend treatment? She was treating me as companion?)” (Erwin)

After introducing her fiancé who resembled me well, she left.

“Hey, it's the grand marriage interview meeting, however...”

What is Wend saying? I don't understand.

“Erw-boy, you can choose as you like.” (Burkhart)

It seems that Burkhart-san is saying something as well, but I don't understand that either.

“You are Erwin-sama, right? I'm called Irene Firien Fähriger.”

Some girl-like person has started to talk to me, but I don't comprehend.

“It's no good. That's a serious injury.” (Burkhart)

“Burkhart-san, is it better to give up this time?”

“He's young, thus it will probably alright even if he delays it by one or two years.” (Burkhart)

“Right...”

The outsiders are talking about various things, but I don't understand the meaning of their words neither do they enter my head.

“(But you know... It's the long-awaited grand marriage interview meeting.)”

I'm barely able to recognize that much.

Certainly, my first love ended.

It ended with me getting completely rejected.

“(However, will I give up on everything because of that?)”

I’m still young.

There might certainly exist a second Karla-san in this world.

There are many participants in the grand marriage interview meeting organized by Wend.

There might even be a woman that fits me perfectly among them.

“(Stand up! Erwin! I will find a new love!)”

Mustering my willpower, I regain my self which was in a daze due to the shock of a broken heart.

“(I will even get several wives just like Wend! Aim for a small harem!)”

Having overcome my unrequited love, something like a shock doesn’t exist for me anymore.

I will definitely show that by getting a wonderful woman, who surpasses Karla-san, as wife.

“Wend, is there any wonderful woman among the participants?” (Erwin)

“Ehh...? The grand marriage interview meeting has already ended though...”
(Wendelin)

Wend thrusts an outrageous truth at me who finally woke up.

“Look! The cleaning up has already started.”

The cleaning up of the tables and such had already begun in the mansion’s garden.

And even before that, there’s not a single participant here either.

“Everyone is showing their partner around the city after deciding on one and there also some who have started to prepare living together.” (Wendelin)

“Huh?” (Erwin)

“Sorry, Erw. If I helped you more forcefully this time...” (Wendelin)

“No... It’s fine...” (Erwin)

My pride wouldn't allow it for Wend to make Karla-san forcefully marry me even though there's a partner she has set her heart on. Rather than that, when I finally came to my senses, the grand marriage interview meeting had already ended. Isn't that in itself a shock?

"Sooner or later we will have another marriage interview meeting..."

"No, I will find a wonderful woman by myself!"

Now that it has turned out like this, I will show my backbone. I will definitely find a far more wonderful woman than Karla-san, and marry her. Swearing that in my heart, I exclaimed it on the spot as if declaring it.

"Such dream-like aim will cause you to stay single for a long time to come."
(Katharina)

Katharina says something quite rude. Although she herself doesn't have a man she gets along with except Wend.

"Nevertheless, Wendelin-san is there for me." (Katharina)

And I was slightly vexed that I couldn't object.

Chapter 87 – Duel with the Sis-con Samurai

“Ei! Tou!”

When I left the house together with Elise and the others after dressing ourselves in the early morning, Erw swung a katana enthusiastically in a space that is equivalent to a garden.

Having obtained Mizuho clothes before anyone noticed, his appearance now looks like that of a foreign swordsman.

In my eyes his movements of swinging the katana started to look quite good. Though that’s as far as it goes, as for the judgment of an amateur.

Even Haruka, who’s coaching him, didn’t say anything in particular and gazed at his form.

However, as expected of a beautiful samurai girl, she looks good by just standing there.

It’s also good that Erw’s expression doesn’t break into a foppish grin.

“Oyy~~, Erw.” (Wendelin)

“Wend? So, how’s my katana aptitude?” (Erwin)

“So-so?” (Wendelin)

I’d like him to pardon me from giving an accurate comment as amateur. I don’t have any talent in using a katana. I have already given up on the path of swordsmanship a long time ago and don’t practise it either.

If I had such time, I would rather spend it on training my magic or archery as that would be more efficient, I think.

“Even though things may appear this way, it gives off quite the good vibe.”
(Haruka)

“Is that so?” (Wendelin)

Once I ask Haruka, who’s at his side, she begins to explain while revealing an attractive smile.

“Erw-san became already strong enough that it’s at least possible for him to be enlisted in the Battou Unit. He reached the point where he’s able to fight

quite evenly against my elder brother.” (Haruka)

“That’s amazing, isn’t it?” (Wendelin)

According to Haruka, Erw has more talent in using the katana than the sword. The reason why he didn’t know about that until now is probably because katana don’t exist in Helmut Kingdom.

It seems there are very few people that possess one, but it’s at the level of being secretly collected by some maniacs.

However I think he did well to get this far in such a short time.

When I thought that, Erw got happy by Haruka handing him something like towel to wipe away the sweat.

Since Erw’s original facial features are decent, it gives the impression of a beautiful manager handing a towel to the ace after finishing club activity.

As he has talent in using the katana to begin with, he’s probably eager to show his good points to Haruka.

His motive was evil, but I don’t think it’s a problem since he actually got strong by seriously training.

“(Riajuus do exist...) Katana, huh? Is that the one you bought first?”
(Wendelin)

“Yea. Though it’s a crude, mass-produced item, I suppose.” (Erwin)

Erw shows me the katana he has been swinging.

Once I examine the quality of the material with the 『Analyse』 spell since I don’t have any accurate knowledge about Japanese swords at all, it was steel with quite the high purity.

“It was created by a campaign expert blacksmith of the national army of Earl Mizuho Country. The material was the one you gave me before, Wend.” (Erwin)

“Aah, the one I prepared, you say?” (Wendelin)

“Don’t be so forgetful.” (Erwin)

I remember that because Erw told me about making a katana, I gathered an appropriate amount of iron sand from the ground, removed the surplus components, formed it into a clump of iron and gave it to him.

“Do you possess talent in smithing as well, Earl Baumeister-sama?” (Haruka)

“No, I simply collected it with magic.” (Wendelin)

I’m not proud of it, but I didn’t receive anything better than average scores in practical subjects such as art, crafting and physical education in my previous life.

It’s unthinkable for me to have talent in the making of Japanese swords or similar.

I simply extracted the metal from the ground by using magic.

I answered Haruka’s question in such manner.

“I’m good at gathering metal from abandoned mines and mine polluted ponds, but processing it is impossible for me.” (Wendelin)

It’s regrettable since I could have flourished as magic tool craftsman if I was able to do so.

The reason for me thinking that is because I selfishly consider the appearance of craftsmen as cool.

“However, it was praised by the swordsmith to be magnificent raw material.” (Haruka)

Mizuho katana become high-quality products if they are smithed by using raw materials with an iron purity that is as high as possible.

Even so, if you create iron with the technology of this world from iron ore originating from a mine, it ends up becoming an alloy-like metal with titan and such mixed in.

In that case it apparently tends towards becoming a hard weapon, but as flexibility is very essential for a katana as well, the expensive katana seem to be produced by expressly gathering iron sand with a high purity from rivers and similar.

I heard that they did the same in old Japan as well.

My superior’s hobby at my workplace were Japanese swords. That’s why I heard about it at the year-end party.

“Originally it’s high-quality iron that’s not used for crude katanas.”

“Hee, really?” (Wendelin)

No matter how much Earl Mizuho Country excels at technology, they seem to be unable to obtain high-quality iron as katana material that easily.

The work of removing the impurities from the iron and processing it into steel is surely something that relies heavily on magic, I guess.

What is handed out as sword that can be used by a low-ranking soldier in the kingdom and empire is an item that gets forged with just sturdiness as its main attribute.

A sword that is forged by a blacksmith himself actually swinging his hammer is something that will be bought by low-ranking nobles after saving up money.

“This katana is amazing, but once I get much better, I want to create a katana out of orichalcum.” (Erwin)

“Out of orichalcum? Can you make that?”

If Mizuho katana and Japanese katana are identical, I wonder whether it's possible to recreate a katana that is made by combining hard and soft iron with just orichalcum?

I felt slightly doubtful about that.

“I have been told that the top class Mizuho katana are a combination of soft secret steel, where pure orichalcum is processed in a special way, and hard secret steel, which is a mixture of mithril and orichalcum with a fixed ratio, following the secret formula of Earl Mizuho Country.” (Haruka)

As expected of the beautiful samurai girl.

Having the necessary knowledge, coupled with her appearance, Haruka was the most suitable to explain the Mizuho katana.

“Isn't it wrong to tell people of a foreign country too much about such secrets?”

“If it's this degree of knowledge, all of the empire's blacksmiths know about it. The precise mixing ratio and the unique method of processing are tightly kept hidden. Even I'm not fully aware of those.” (Haruka)

“I see...”

There are too many secret techniques in Earl Mizuho Country anyway.

Putting aside the magic katana, I was surprised by those magic rifles.

From the standpoint of Duke Nürnberg who is a firm ultranationalist, they were likely seen as threat that should be either dominated or destroyed.

Though, in my case it wasn't a serious issue as I want to be on good terms with them since it's a distant, semi-independent nation that reminds me of Japan.

"Orichalcum katana possess offensive abilities comparable to magic katana after being charged with mana, even if they are not regularly maintained in a sophisticated process by craftsmen. Therefore there are many among the Mizuho people who desire one." (Haruka)

The orichalcum sword that Erw obtained, cut through many golems in Herthania Valley like tofu.

If it's an orichalcum katana, its sharpness is even better, Haruka says.

"Erw, have them make small and big orichalcum katana." (Wendelin)

"No, that's probably unreasonable." (Erwin)

"Yes. Leaving the costs aside, the material is lacking." (Haruka)

According to what Haruka says, there's apparently no orichalcum on stock. If there was, it would have been made into katana for the Mizuho household and the chief retainer households. As of yet there's almost nothing on stock, Haruka explained.

A new orichalcum mine hasn't currently been discovered in Earl Mizuho Country, it seems.

"I have the material!" (Wendelin)

All the orichalcum that was mined in the Savage Lands and Herthania Valley was delivered to me. I also gathered it in my childhood by using mana wastefully if there was even the slightest response to my search spells. Orichalcum can't be collected in quantity anyway.

Discovering promising large-scale ore deposits, I finally gathered around 200 kilogram after mining for several years.

Lately, the iron deposits were big hits, I guess.

To a degree that such conversations are held between the mining staff.

Rather, there have been many orichalcum products that had been excavated from ancient ruins.

"I will provide the material for two katana and give them Erw's orichalcum sword to make up for their effort." (Wendelin)

“That’s fine with you?” (Erwin)

Even though it’s only material, one sword has an amount of orichalcum that allows for two Mizuho katana with different sizes to be made.

Taking into account the processing fee, Erw apparently realizes that my side will incur a loss.

“You know, even if I possess a katana...” (Wendelin)

If it’s a sword, I might be able to at least kill a single soldier.

However, even if I unreasonably owned a katana, the current me would definitely be unable to handle it.

I longed for one as I’m a Japanese, but there’s no meaning if I can’t use it.

That means letting Erw keep it is the most efficient solution.

“Besides, my last defense line are you after all, Erw.” (Wendelin)

“Certainly, that’s my job.” (Erwin)

“Then, accept it.” (Wendelin)

I pass a clump of orichalcum to Erw.

It was around half of my stock, but it should be possible to forge the necessary number of katana with this.

“Isn’t that too much?” (Erwin)

“Can you forge around three katana with this? For the time being, please try to create only what is possible.” (Wendelin)

I asked Erw to order the creation of the Japanese swords.

“Won’t you come to the expert blacksmith’s place as well, Wend?” (Erwin)

“Studying by observation? That’s a great idea.” (Wendelin)

Following Haruka, Erw and I moved to the the field workshop that’s adjacent to the headquarters of Earl Mizuho Country’s national army.

The campaign’s master smiths and magic tools craftsmen repair and produce weapons and armours here.

Several dozens master smiths and magic tool craftsmen forged katana and maintained magic rifles.

“Erwin-dono? How’s the katana I forged for you?”

The one who called out to Erw was an elderly person with an appearance that immediately told one that he’s a very skilled katana smith.

Wearing clothes that resembled a monk’s working clothes, he walks over to us while wiping his sweat off with a towel.

“I have grown accustomed to it.” (Erwin)

“That’s great. So, he’s Earl Baumeister-sama, right?”

“Yes. As a matter of fact, my lord appears to have a request...” (Erwin)

“Is it a katana creation request? Aah, sorry for forgetting to mention it. I’m called Kanesada the 87th, a master smith employed by the Mizuho household.”
(Kanesada)

Going by his name, he seems to be a person who forges great katana. It appears there are people who make Japanese swords as family occupation for generations in Earl Mizuho Country, too.

“I’m Wendelin von Benno Baumeister. I’d like you to actually forge katana out of orichalcum.”

Once I say so, Erw gives the clump of orichalcum to Kanesada.

“You did well to obtain such a big amount. I guess it will result in two sets of of large and small katana, and one dagger.” (Kanesada)

I guess as should be expected of a renown artisan. Seeing the clump of orichalcum, he can immediately estimate the number of katana that can be created from it.

“Then, please forge katana for Erw.” (Wendelin)

“I will gladly receive your order.” (Kanesada)

“Kanesada-san, will that be really alright?” (Erwin)

Erw apparently holds Kanesada in high esteem. He addressed him in a polite tone.

“It’s because you have improved at a magnificent pace, Erwin-san. I believe it will become necessary very soon. Besides, even if it’s me, I want to be able to

temper orichalcum. Looking at it like this, I'm a greedy master smith."
(Kanesada)

Because orichalcum itself is rare, it looks like people can also forge it seldomly.

In the eyes of a master smith it must be a material they long for.

"I might be conceited, but I'm a master smith said to be equal to Kanesada the 1st. Please trust in me as I will certainly forge famous katana." (Kanesada)

"That's very reassuring. Then, here's a big service." (Wendelin)

I take out the other half of the orichalcum from my magic bag.

"Then it will become five sets of small and big katana, and one dagger."
(Kanesada)

"I won't specify a time for delivery. Please forge them until you can agree with them." (Wendelin)

"Thank you." (Kanesada)

As he demanded a clump of iron, that had its composition adjusted by me, as payment, and a bit of mithril to be used as component, I have given those to him as well.

"Earl Baumeister-sama, you can refine high-grade iron with magic, right? If it's this iron, everyone will be delighted." (Kanesada)

"Then, I leave it to you." (Wendelin)

When the three of us returned to our hose since we finished requesting the production of the Japanese swords, several Mizuho people awaited us in front of the entrance.

Going by their attires, they appear to be quite high-ranking chief retainers.

"Earl Baumeister-sama, please sell me the Mizuho katana you requested by providing the materials."

"I'd like you to sell them to me!"

"If it's money, I will pay! How about 300.000 ryo?"

"I will pay 400.000 ryou!"

It seems they swiftly got hold of the information about me having carried in a large amount of orichalcum to the field workshop. They approached with a very strong intensity asking me to sell the completed katana to them.



“Hee, something like that happened?”

On that day, Burkhart-san listens very interested to the details during the chat at the dinner location.

“The Mizuho katana is a swordsman’s pride, their soul.” (Haruka)

“I do understand that they cherish them, but...” (Ina)

Haruka explains the frantic emotions of wanting to obtain an orichalcum-made katana harboured by her countrymen as if it’s easy to understand. Ina was able to understand that they treasure the weapons which save their own lives, but being told about pride, soul or such, she seems uncertain of the meaning.

One more person tilted their head to the side.

“Elise, do you understand?”

What I know is just the knowledge that the samurai in the old Japan cherished their katana.

As this is just knowledge to the bitter end, I myself don’t harbour such sentiments towards katana.

I think it’s only at the level of having some yearning and thinking 『I have to take care of it』.

“It’s like cherishing the scriptures and the priestess’ garb, for example?”

“Yes. Though these are important, God states that 『Don’t cling to possessions』...”

It’s probably a proverb for the sake of restraining materialistic desires, but I can understand them being unable to cooperate religiously with Earl Mizuho Country due to this point.

Actually there are many priests who like money and expensive items though.

“It’s not like Earl Mizuho Country is particularly adhering to items. Rather, I

think it has the meaning that they will cherish a katana they had forged once as much as possible.”

“If it’s that way of thinking, I can understand.”

I don’t comprehend talks about philosophy or religion at all.
I just said it non-committally, but Ina and the others are puzzled as they apparently can’t understand after all.
As for Doushi, he concentrated on the food.
I guess he has absolutely no interest.
What Doushi cherishes is probably his own body.

“It might be easier to understand if you call a katana a partner to whom you entrust your own life.” (Erwin)

“That’s it, Erw-san.” (Haruka)

Haruka is usually a quiet woman.
She owns the two aspects of showing no openings as first-class swordsgirl and her feminine virtues of old Japan.
However, after getting involved with Erw, she talks about various things while looking happy.

“(There’s hope for Erw?)” (Wendelin)

It’s desirable as Erw’s best friend and at the same time it’s related to having a link to Earl Mizuho Country.
After all that country has many of the dearly-missed, Japanese-like items I desire.



“So, how is it going? With Haruka?” (Wendelin)

“I think my conquest is close at hand.” (Erwin)

After dinner I called Erw and tried to ask him when it was just the two of us.
As expected, it seems that there’s hope.

“However, there’s a single problem...”

It seems that Haruka’s elder brother makes a fuss with 『You can forget it if you are not at least an even match with me!』.

I end up thinking that he's a stubborn old man from someplace.

“That's from the viewpoint as next family head of a retainer household?”
(Wendelin)

It's a fact that he was the next family head of an outrageous retainer household, but originally, Haruka's home is a retainer household with a low social position. Them being currently treated well is because the elder brother and the younger sister are excellent with katana to a degree of being chosen for the Battou Unit.

Even without the guarantee that his own children will be skilled enough to enter the Battou Unit, he isn't that obsessed with marrying his little sister away first since they are a small household to begin with.

“Haruka is complicated as marriage partner, isn't she?”

Since her pedigree is low, she can't marry into a distinguished retainer household as first wife. She's more excelling with the katana than a husband that might accept her.

In Earl Mizuho Country, that puts importance on katana skill, a wife, who surpasses her husband in ability by miles, seems to be an existence that gets treated as something troublesome.

“That's why all the other women affiliated with the Battou Unit are single as well.”

In addition, there's her elder brother, too.

He loves his younger sister and seems to constantly voice his opinion of 『Rather than being troubled by getting married into some strange place, stay at home forever』.

In short, he is what's commonly referred as sis-con.

Given that his younger sister can't help being lovely, he probably doesn't want her to become a wife if possible at all.

“Haruka's elder brother, I met him in the past as well, didn't I?” (Wendelin)

“Yeah.” (Erwin)

As he possesses top-class ability for a young man, he was previously introduced to me by High Earl Mizuho.

I remember that he looked like a very serious youth, but having a sister complex certainly isn't something that you can deduct from a person's appearance.

"Shall I ask Haruka's elder brother...?" (Wendelin)

"Please. Going by my current ability, it will take several years until I can compete against Haruka's elder brother." (Erwin)

Erw seems to be confident that he will be able to catch up with the katana to Haruka's elder brother's.

Since he's actually got talent as well, that's probably no conceited bragging either.

"If we waited until then, Haruka will be a woman who missed her chance of getting married, I guess."

"Wai-! You!"

If Therese hears about this, it will turn into a scandal for Erw.

I blocked Erw's mouth in panic.

"Anyway, it will be fine if I try asking Haruka's elder brother personally."
(Wendelin)

"I leave it to you, Wend." (Erwin)

The next morning I head to the encampment of Earl Mizuho Country's national army together with Erw and Haruka.

Once we go towards the station of the Battou Unit within that encampment, Haruka's elder brother was practising with his katana there.

"Oh, Earl Baumeister-sama? I'm grateful for you taking care of Haruka."

"Hello." (Wendelin)

Haruka's elder brother, who doesn't look like a sis-con but a diligent and fluent youth, stopped his training and greeted me with a cheerful voice.

"Has Haruka been helpful to you?"

"She has good skills after all. I won't ever be able to win against her with my swordsmanship." (Wendelin)

When I praised Haruka's katana skills, his mood improved.

Moreover, he seems to be relieved after confirming that his younger sister looks just as usual.

“As a matter of fact, there’s something I’d like to speak about with you...”
(Wendelin)

“It’s not allowed! No matter what, no!”

Once I try speaking about it, he suddenly refuses me before I can even really start.

He apparently partially sensed with his instinct what I was going to ask him.

“Nii-sama? What’s not allowed?” (Haruka)

“It’s nothing you need to know, Haruka!”

“???” (Haruka)

“(Huh?)”

At this moment I realize a certain fact.

As Haruka is far too serious, she doesn’t seem to have much of knowledge in that direction.

No, I guess she simply hasn’t noticed it?

It looks like she hasn’t realized until now that she might be married to Erw.

It was possible that her being friendly to Erw was just because her happiness about the improvement speed of Erw’s skills influenced by her, as simple swordsmanship idiot.

“Let’s have a chat for the time being.”

“No! It’s in vain. Something like sending my cute younger sister to a foreign country!”

I suppose as elder brother he doesn’t want his lovely younger sister to be send as wife to a foreign country.

In such case it will be fine if I rely on High Earl Mizuho, but even if he’s ordered from above, it would leave a bad aftertaste on the emotional side.

It would likely be the best if we could receive his consent.

“What’s wrong about Erw?” (Wendelin)

“He has talent, but he’s still inexperienced.”

“Be that as it may, how many years do you want to make him wait?”

“That is...”

He wishes to keep his adorable younger sister at his side, but having said that, she will think badly of him as elder brother if he obstructs a marriage for his own reasons.

Haruka’s brother seems to continue being conflicted in his mind.

“... If Haruka lives in a foreign country, there will also be a different culture there...”

“I don’t think that it’s something you have to worry about this much though...”

There isn’t that much of a difference in the language. The food culture is close to Mizuho as well, thanks to me.

Besides, I have placed the condition to enter trade with Earl Mizuho Country as reward for cooperating towards an end of the civil war in the empire.

I will go shopping there regularly. At that time Haruka should be able to serve as good guide.

As long as 『Teleportation』 exists, she will be able to visit her home right away.

“But...”

“Even if you throw a tantrum like a child, it’s inevitable, isn’t it?”

As for me, I won’t force Haruka, if she dislikes it.

There’s plenty of other candidates. Erw doesn’t wish for that either.

However, I had no intention to pull back with her elder brother’s refusal as reason.

“The man, to whom I entrust Haruka, has to be strong.”

“However...”

Defeat me if you want my younger sister.

Putting aside something like that as story, in reality it’s established as being nothing more than bothersome.

I don’t think that there’s a household that has any merit in inviting Haruka as wife or that there’s man, who’s stronger than her elder brother, loving Haruka

at present.

In that case, I don't consider it to be that bad as first connection between the Earl Baumeister household and Earl Mizuho Country.

If I told High Earl Mizuho about it, he should give me an okay right away.

"It's no good unless it's a man who can win against me."

In the next few years Erw will probably have skills at the level of being at least even to Haruka's elder brother.

Although there's such judgment, I have a problem with waiting for several years just like that.

I think I at least want him to value the future prospects.

"Won't Erw be good enough in several years?"

"It's no good if it's not now! Anyway, it's pointless!"

Haruka's elder brother was obstinate.

The emotional aspect is big, but he might also not follow the concept of enlarging the household with forced political marriages since they are a low-ranking retainer household.

Well then, how should I get the person himself to agree?

"How about if you fight with a sword and not a katana, Erw?" (Wendelin)

"No, the current me can't win, even if it's with a sword." (Erwin)

From my point of view, Erw's swordsmanship looks to be considerably developed, but Haruka's elder brother is even further above that. And in the Earl Mizuho Country there are several masters who exceed even Haruka's elder brother.

"(How about having a try and going for it for the time being? After all it might be possible.)"

"(If I lose with that, the talks will reset to the starting point again.) (Erwin)

"(That's right isn't it...?)" (Wendelin)

Since he's saying that he won't hand over Haruka as wife if he can't win, it's necessary to somehow defeat Haruka's brother.

"It's fine even if it's you, Earl Baumeister-sama."

“Eh? Me?” (Wendelin)

I’m bewildered by Haruka’s brother’s sudden proposal.

“Aren’t you Erwin-dono’s lord, Earl Baumeister-sama? If you are strong, I will be able to let her go with a peace of mind.”

I don’t understand why it’s alright even if it’s me.

I don’t have any particular intention to take Haruka as wife. There’s not a splinter of a chance that my swordsmanship is better than Erw’s.

“Are you aware of my swordsmanship skills?” (Wendelin)

“No, I want to fight against your magic, Earl Baumeister-sama. That’s your strongest weapon, isn’t it?”

“Magic, you say?” (Wendelin)

I end up wondering whether Haruka’s elder brother isn’t an outrageous battle junkie.

He will oppose magic with a katana.

I wondered whether it might be some different kind of hand-to-hand competition, but never did I consider that he would challenge me to such contest.

“Wend, I leave it to you.” (Erwin)

“Uuh... Got it...” (Wendelin)

It’s the request of Erw who’s my retainer and dear friend.

I acknowledged the duel with Haruka’s elder brother.



“Don’t use any exceedingly big magic.”

“Also, killing is forbidden.”

“I know.”

“Tentatively I have to warn you. Your magic is sometimes no joke, Earl-sama.”
(Burkhart)

“Indeed. It has power at the level of calamity class.” (Armstrong)

“As what kind of destroyer do you two see me?” (Wendelin)

“” ... ””

“Please answer normally that it’s a joke at this point.” (Wendelin)

Even though I met with Haruka’s elder brother to have him approve of Erw’s and Haruka’s marriage, it ended up with me dueling him on the grassland located on the parade ground of Earl Mizuho Country’s national army for some reason.

From where did they hear about it?

In addition to Therese, Alfons and High Earl Mizuho, many spectators have gathered at the grassland.

Burkhart-san and Doushi became my seconds before I noticed.

It seems everyone is starving for entertainment in this protracted war while they are expanding the field encampment and colonization.

A subtle blood-thirst welled up in me due to to everyone observing while eating and drinking as they please.

“Don’t be careless.”

“That’s only natural.” (Wendelin)

I can’t use too strong magic. And Haruka’s brother possesses a magic katana. Since I have never been actually attacked by one of those yet, it was difficult for me to predict to what degree it can destroy a 『Magic Barrier』.

“Seeing the nature of magic katana, an elementary magician will be killed if they are careless.” (Armstrong)

“Is it a magician killer?”

“I don’t know since there’s likely no opportunity to kill a precious magician if there’s no war, but the probability is high.” (Armstrong)

It’s just as Doushi says, but that might mean that Haruka’s elder brother wants to get a hang of this with a real combat format duel against me. It seems that I’m used as a guinea pig here.

“Dear, please be careful of injuries.” (Elise)

“We will stop at injuries that are in the range of your healing capability, Elise.”

(Wendelin)

Elise called out to me while looking worried.

“Wend, I think that Haruka’s onii-san is a different case than Erw.” (Ina)

“I see. I don’t know anything but him being somehow amazing.” (Wendelin)

There’s a difference between katana and spear, but Ina was surprised by Haruka’s brother’s high ability.

I don’t comprehend anything but him being quite good more or less.

Although I could roughly measure the capacity of a magician, I was an outsider in regards to katana techniques.

“You practiced swordsmanship in the past as well, Wend, didn’t you?” (Luise)

“Seeing that I have no talent, it can’t be helped.” (Wendelin)

“I don’t think that you will lose easily if it’s magic, but it’s best if you are not stingy with the mana for your 『Magic Barrier』, Wend.” (Luise)

Luise also revealed her wariness towards Haruka’s brother who is confronting me with around 20 meters between us.

“Don’t allow him to close in on you.” (Wilma)

“Anyway, don’t give your opponent the initiative by rapidly firing small spells.” (Katharina)

After receiving advice from Wilma and Katharina as well, I will fight against Haruka’s elder brother.

“I don’t understand the reason completely, but... Normally it’s probably a setting where Erw fights, causes a miracle and Haruka’s brother brings it to an end with 『You are quite the guy, aren’t you?』.”

And yet I’m stuck competing against him with the reasoning that I’m Erw’s lord.

I don’t get it at all.

“Is that guy a battle junkie or something like that?” (Wendelin)

“It’s certain that he’s a person who has large targets. He might wish for power that enables him to fight against magicians to some extent.” (Erwin)

“I’m the guinea pig for that, huh...?” (Wendelin)

“Sorry. Nii-sama has...” (Haruka)

I end up complaining to Erw unintentionally, but once I see Haruka apologizing next to him, there’s no way for me to throw the match. If I win, we will at least gain Haruka’s brother’s approval for a marriage between Erw and Haruka.

“Oh well, don’t mind. It will be fine if I win.” (Wendelin)

While cracking a joke for the sake of Haruka, I’m actually convinced of my victory in my mind. Seeing that I have a 『Magic Barrier』, the other side’s attacks won’t get through, not matter how I think about it.

“Then, let’s start?”

“Earl Baumeister-sama, let’s have a fair fight.”

Elise and the others leave me vicinity and the match begins at the same time as Burkhart-san launches a fireball into the sky as signal. Seeing that my opponent uses a katana, there’s no point unless he gets close to me. That means that it would be best for my side to make him accumulate damage with magic that out-ranges him. First I create a large amount of pellets with magic and then I release them towards Haruka’s brother with different timing. He should become incapable of fighting if he’s hit by several of them. As expected, it would be wrong of me to kill him in front of his younger sister. There’s also the side of High Earl Mizuho who is his lord.

“Naive!”

However, Haruka’s brother draws his katana at lightning speed and repels the pellets by cutting them one after the other. His movements were just like the user of a sword that cuts iron that appears in a certain 3rd generation series. *(T/N: Goemon Ishikawa XIII from Lupin 3rd, I think. At least he fits the bill here)*

“No way!” (Wendelin)

I, who ended up having all my pellets cut apart, fire small fireballs in succession at Haruka's brother next.

Once I do so, he drew his third sword, the magic katana which is his trump card. When Haruka's brother swings the katana blade that's clad in a faint bluish-white light, the fireballs vanish one after the other while giving off a 『poof』 sound.

“Water attribute, eh?!”

“It's possible to regulate the mana quantity and attribute used by a magic katana!”

Next I release small wind cutters in succession.

Those have killed and wounded many soldiers in the capital and during our escape, but they are also extinguished by the yellow-glowing blade in succession.

My wind cutters ended up getting erased by him cladding the blade in earth-attribute mana.

“(Mizuho magic katana; aren't those dangerous?)”

If one's at the level of an unskilled elementary magician, they will get easily killed by a master magic katana user.

This is what Duke Nürnberg should be wary of.

“(This means I can't afford to let him get close.)”

The magic katana's flaw is that it will turn into a simple katana once the magic gem inside runs out of mana.

In that case it will be fine if I make him waste it as much as possible while not letting him draw closer.

Since he will approach even while cutting fireballs or such, I next take out the sword without blade I received from master in the past.

I immediately produce a fire blade and after stabbing that into the ground, I release 『Fire Snakes』 that run towards Haruka's brother in rapid succession.

“Tsk!”

Of course they shouldn't hit him, but Haruka's brother had to stop his advance in order to evade.

During that time I gradually fell back to the rear.

“『Ice Snake』, 『Earth Drive』 and 『Whirlwind Cutter』, I wonder which of them is good?” (Wendelin)

Since I don't expect Haruka's brother to answer, I fire in rapid succession while adding feints into it.

Anyway, it's in order to not allow him getting close, as I was told by Wilma and Katharina.

If I'm late in deploying the 『Magic Barrier』 in worst case, it will spell my defeat.

“There's nothing that's impossible for a magic katana.”

Haruka's brother continued to dodge my magic, but after moving widely to the side, he stabs the magic katana into the ground.

The blade shines red for an instant and a flame as if a fuse was lit heads my way.

It seems that he's copying my magic.

“(Even though he isn't a magician, magic katana are frightening items, I guess. But...)”

I had waited for this.

I think that it's amazing, but such attack will exhaust the precious remaining mana in the magic katana.

If Haruka's elder brother, who's not a magician, loses the mana of the magic katana, he will return to being a simple excellent swordsman.

Actually, when the magic katana erased several 『Ice Snake』 spells, light vanished from that katana.

“Fufu. There’s no mana left in the magic katana!”

Suddenly Haruka’s brother opens the hilt of the magic katana, removes the the empty magic gem and replaces it with a spare magic gem he took out from his pocket.

It was a shocking reality.

The magic gem inside a magic katana was exchangeable like a battery once it used up its mana.

“However, this way things will never end. Let me oppose you with my entire power from now on.”

No sooner than saying that, Haruka’s brother charges in a straight line towards me.

I try to hinder his approach with a series of fireballs in a hurry, but all of them are erased with a large swing of the magic katana.

“Wh-!”

He attempted to get close to me in one go without economizing on his mana. As there’s a difference in physical ability to begin with, my retreat won’t be in time.

Since Haruka’s brother approached very close, I defend with a big fireball having a diameter of 1 meter next, but it ends up being cut in two by the magic katana that was clad in water attribute.

“『Magic Barrier』!”

There’s almost no distance between me and Haruka’s elder brother anymore. If he gets this close, I have no other choice but to continue defending against his attacks with a 『Magic Barrier』.

Therefore I cast a 『Magic Barrier』, but I had somehow a bad premonition for an instant.

It was a kind of 6th sense, but I have a hunch that I will go through a bitter experience most of the times if I ignore these things.

Accordingly I made the 『Magic Barrier』 thicker than usual and it seems my intuition was correct.

“Mizuho Shinkage-Ryu Secret Technique 『Wolf Fang』!”

Haruka's brother didn't slash but unleashed a thrusting attack that focused on one point.

He plots to break through at one point by charging just the magic katana's point with mana.

This judgment is correct. It was a situation where his attack pierced almost completely through the skin of the 『Magic Barrier』 that was thicker than usual. If I didn't follow my intuition, I would have probably lost after getting stabbed in a vital spot.

Since we aren't allowed to kill each other, I have lowered the mana output as handicap, but even so, it's true that I would have lost.

“It's my loss.”

At the moment his full power attack didn't reach, Haruka's brother put the magic katana back into its sheath and accepted his defeat.

“I would have lost if I didn't make the 『Magic Barrier』 thicker after getting some bad premonition, you know?” (Wendelin)

“That intuition is something you obtained by diligently devoting yourself to your studies, Earl Baumeister-sama.”

“You are strong.”

“No, not at all. I'm still too much of a novice. By the way, it's about Haruka's matter. Seeing that I lost the match I believe that I want to approve of it. If Haruka goes to Earl Baumeister-sama's place, she will probably be relieved as well. Erwin will become strong before long, too.”

“That's great.”

There was worth in going as far as having a duel.
With this the obstacle to Erw's and Haruka's marriage vanished at last.

“Haruka-san.”

“Erw-san.”

And then Erw and Haruka, the two concerned parties, stared at each other. The rest depends on Erw showing his ability, I guess.

“Though it's after this war ends, but would you come to Baumeister Earldom

with me, Haruka-san?”

“Yes, gladly.” (Haruka)

Haruka agrees to Erw’s proposal without any hesitation.

“Finally Erw-boy will marry as well, won’t he?” (Burkhart)

“That’s nice, isn’t it?” (Armstrong)

“Can’t thou make such a proposal to me as well, Wendelin?” (Therese)

“No, that’s impossible, I think.” (Alfons)

“Alfons, there’s no need for thee to respond calmly only at such times.”
(Therese)

A part of the gallery was noisy, but above all it’s great that things came safely to an end.

Once Erw succeeded in proposing, the surrounding looks turned at the receiver Haruka...

That should be so, but for some reason it created an unexpected accident in this place.

Next Haruka said something unthinkable.

“Yes. I will be Erw-san’s swordsmanship instructor. I gratefully accept!”
(Haruka)

“Yes?” (Erwin)

Erw apparently intended to propose to her, but Haruka seems to have perceived it as having obtained the permission to go to Baumeister Earldom as Erw’s swordsmanship instructor.

Meaning her own elder brother only opposed his younger sister going to a foreign country.

Due to Haruka’s unforeseen reply, Erw’s eyes turned into dots.

“Which reminds me, did anyone talk to Haruka about marrying Erw?”

Once I try considering it from another angle, I feel like we never directly talked to her about a marriage.

At least I have attached such condition though.

“So, how about you, onii-san?” (Haruka)

“Sorry... My words were only in opposition to you going to Baumeister Earldom...”

There was also the issue of swordsmanship ability, but as Haruka’s brother, who’s basically a sis-con, couldn’t permit the fact of his younger sister marrying, he apparently didn’t try to use this move of education at all.

With her being a beauty, having talent in swordsmanship and being skilled with things such as cooking and sewing, she’s a woman with the image of displaying the female virtues of old Japan, but it seems that the knowledge about romance or marriage mostly hasn’t entered her mind.

“Imouto-san, have you been hit on by your comrades in the Battou Unit?”

“I made such bad people understand with training.”

Since both, younger sister and elder brother, belong to the Battou Unit, he apparently fought hard so that no strange bugs attached themselves to Haruka. He’s truly a man appropriate to be called the mirror image of a sis-con.

“Since we will get the permission from High Earl Mizuho, make sure to properly explain it to your younger sister as the next family head and as elder brother.”

“Please excuse me from that.”

“(As expected of a sis-con...) Not allowed. Do it!”

I won.

If he can’t yield that much, I have to strengthen my tone and order Haruka’s elder brother.

“I will comply...”

Seizing both shoulders of Haruka’s brother with both hands, I succeed in persuading him.

However, something like refusing the demand of an Earl, albeit from another country, this man is a frightening sis-con.

Since he’s an old-styled swordsman going by his appearance and as he usually conducts himself in such manner as well, there’s probably few people who have

realized the instinct of a sis-con flowing inside the heart of this man.

“The rest is just getting the permission from High Earl Mizuho, I guess.”

With the hindrance to Erw’s and Haruka’s marriage finally having vanished, I sighed in relief from the bottom of my heart.

Chapter 88 – Too many cooks spoil the broth

“HMMMM. It’s possible to eat it normally.” (Armstrong)

“It’s not delicious though.”

“It’s fodder for horses after all.”

Two weeks after the duel with Haruka’s elder brother; during the continuous, long encampment I endeavoured in my hobby of food research after finishing my training in magic today as well.

If one were to ask why I’m doing something like that, it’s because it is my free time once I finish my assigned work and training.
Be that as it may, I’m not doing anything that complicated.

At a section of the training venue located in the encampment of Earl Mizuho Country’s national army, the three of us are simply creating stew by using a big pot on a portable magic stove.

Our most recent subject was the practical application of the Idiot Daikon that has been cultivated in large quantities on the fields by the garrison as fodder for the horses.

Is there any way to cook these unappetizing Idiot Daikon into something delicious?
It’s a difficult problem we are unable to tackle successfully, therefore it’s something to get us fired up, no... allowing us to waste time.



[Wendelin, thou are doing something strange there.] (Therese)

[Humans can’t survive without eating.] (Wendelin)

Even throughout the astonishment of Therese who is already staying permanently at the field encampment that finished its expansion, I continue my trial and error.

Also the rebel army led by Duke Nürnberg has deployed several forces of a few thousands in the vicinity to watch out over this field encampment, but as of yet there’s no sign of them sending forth a large army.
According to the intelligence of our spies, they seem to be struggling with the

eastern and western parts close to the center and the south.

No matter how much they have taken the family heads as hostages, the prince-electors' households probably won't obediently listen to what they are told.

[There's someone just like them on our side as well] (Therese)

The Duke Baden household, the sole prince-electors' following our side except the Duke Philip household, seems to have initiated various schemes to seize the initiative.

Because there will only be two emperor candidates left after the rebel army got defeated, it appears that his greed is gradually peeking out.

It doesn't seem that he will pull the rug from below our feet for now since we have the same goal, but getting impatient due to the current situation, the young Duke Baden reached the point of talking about capturing several cities and bases.

Amassing several military victories besides the first battle will establish our superiority over the rebel army.

The young Duke Baden proposed this strategic plan at the regular meeting and received support from several noble households that have sent out additional troops after being able to invite many estranged noble households that were hesitating because of the rebel army's conduct.

Therese said that it's possible for that to be a temptation. She is rejecting that strategic plan as Duke Nürnberg might have adopted a waiting stance and thus it's possible they will suffer an unexpected surprise attack if they split up the military forces into smaller groups.

As someone that has no military talent, I don't know which side is correct, but my personal opinion leans towards Therese's plan.

The reason for that is that I felt something similar to impatience from the young Duke Baden.

I'm sure that he wants to accumulate meritorious deeds until the civil war ends in order to be allowed to hold a fair emperor election between him and Therese.

Is there any benefit for the supporting nobles if young Duke Baden becomes the emperor? There are many nobles who simply want to earn rewards by obtaining military achievements.

Seeing that it can be considered as definite that the influence of the big nobles

will change after the war, it's the best chance to increase one's peerage and territory.



"This stew, it's more delicious with normal daikon, you know?"

"Even though I thought it would work out well since it's miso stew..."

Entrails are prepared with miso and a vegetable stew boiled inside the big pot placed on the portable magic stove while making a simmering sound.

"Certainly, using normal daikon makes it tastier, but it's not like it's inedible either."

Doushi starts to eat the miso stew that got boiled in the big pot. Burkhart-san stopped eating it after just tasting a bit of it.

"As expected, the taste of the Idiot Daikon itself is bad, I guess."

While considering today to be a failure as well, I take out another portable magic stove from my magic bag and begin to heat up a big pot I took out likewise.

Inside the pot is amazake. The amazake, that was heated with magic from above as well, heated up to a good temperature within a few minutes.

"Burkhart-san, you will drink it, won't you?"

"I will. Since there's no way for me to drink alcohol in the morning, amazake is a welcome alternative." (Burkhart)

It was great that I bought sake lees from a peddler staying at the encampment of Earl Mizuho Country's national army to use them with the boiled lees since it's still cold outside.

Since the Mizuho dishes are mostly Japanese food, it's a great delight that they suit my taste as well.

"Please don't drink too much, okay? We are waiting for Elise and the others to prepare breakfast." (Wendelin)

"I know, I know." (Burkhart)

"I will drink one cup as well." (Armstrong)

Doushi, who ate all the miso stew that Burkhart-san and me judged as flop, requested some amazake as well.

Since it won't have any particular impact on breakfast in Doushi's case even if he eats heavily here, neither of us cautions him.

"Here you go."

"This is the best on a chilly morning, ain't it?"

"What are you three doing?"

"As usual we are waiting for you, Erw."

"Please stop it because it's embarrassing~~~~!" (Erwin)

At a section where many soldiers and samurai of the Earl Mizuho Country's national army were earnestly practicing, the three of us were creating stew by using a pot on a portable magic stove while not minding the looks of the surroundings.

It's gone to such a degree that one might even call it depravity, but because of the lacking activity of the rebel army, we had free time.

"They probably won't particularly mind since we aren't instigating war euphoria like the young Duke Baden." (Wendelin)

"That's right. It's just as Earl-sama says. One more amazake please."
(Burkhart)

"Please continue your training without caring about us. One more for me as well." (Armstrong)

"I do mind!" (Erwin)

Erw seems to consider our existence as embarrassment.
I don't think it's necessary for him to mind us making stew in a pot that much though.

"Do you want some amazake?" (Wendelin)

"... Yes..." (Erwin)

Even so, it seems that he will drink amazake.
He quietly received the cup with the amazake in it from Doushi.

“Haruka, do you want some as well?” (Wendelin)

“Yes.” (Haruka)

Even Haruka, who’s next to Erw, receives a cup from Burkhardt-san.

“Well, what to say. Seeing as it’s necessary for us to wait, it’s also indispensable for us to moderately relax our attention.”

As Burkhardt-san says; as the war has passed the stage of an early end, it will be meaningless if we lose by getting impatient. Sometimes it’s necessary for an army to wait.

“Though I can also understand your feeling of wanting the war to end swiftly since that will speed up your marriage, Erw.” (Wendelin)

Due to my comment, Haruka’s face became bright red.
The blushing face of a beautiful samurai girl makes quite the picture.
Erw kept his cool on the surface.
Given that he has some experience with women, he likely won’t show his shame openly.

“No, since I don’t want to get killed in action because I hurried before the marriage, I can understand that we have to wait. What I want to tell you is to not cook things in a pot at a section of the practice ground though...” (Erwin)

“You won’t be able to fight on an empty stomach. It’s a research regarding the valid practical use of Idiot Daikon that hasn’t been used for anything but fodder for cattle until now.”

“On a first glance that’s a fair argument, but going by your appearances, it doesn’t look like that’s what you are doing here, does it?” (Erwin)

Erw revealed a fed-up expression at the trio of a boy, a middle-aged man and an elderly man who are simply looking at the state of the cooking big pot. Regarding Erw’s marriage, since it was approved by High Earl Mizuho and Haruka’s elder brother in the end, they have officially become engaged. However, at first it was terrible because Haruka was very shaken.



[I will marry?] (Haruka)

Haruka herself hadn't realized Erw's feelings at all. She seems to be unfamiliar with the subtleties of romance to begin with. It appears that she thought she would stay single for her entire life while devoting herself to the sword. A part of her also thought that there won't be any men who would want someone like her as wife.

[If you dislike Erw, no one will force you though.] (Wendelin)

[No, dislike is... On the contrary, Erw-san is, for a woman like me...] (Haruka)

Although Haruka was a beauty in the Battou Unit, rude comrades, who tried to make a move on her, had been removed by her elder brother and she was apparently kept at distance by the team members saying that they wouldn't like it to lose to a woman in practice.

Her practice partners were just the few other female unit members, her elder brother and those unit members who were stronger than her.

From Haruka's viewpoint, she probably saw Erw as likeable man who learns swordsmanship even from a woman.

Even if, for example, the learning of swordsmanship from Haruka itself is nothing more than a reward from Erw's viewpoint.

[Seeing as Erw has said that it's fine, the rest depends on what you are thinking, Haruka, right?] (Wendelin)

[Me, you say...?] (Haruka)

[Right. It's about what you yourself think about it.] (Wendelin)

[Earl Baumeister-sama, you are strange. There wouldn't be any problem even if you forcefully ordered me to do it.] (Haruka)

[I'm a timid person after all. It would be unbearable if I received a surprise attack by the unhappy wife of my retainer. There won't be any compulsion.] (Wendelin)

[I see. I think I will accept this marriage.] (Haruka)

[That's excellent.] (Wendelin)

[The only ones who have treated me as woman until now were my female

colleagues in the Battou Unit, my older brother and Erw-san. Erw-san is always gentle to me.] (Haruka)

Since Erw is deeply in love with the Mizuho beauty Haruka, it's only natural for him to treat her kindly, I think.

However, this natural treatment probably made her happy.

She accepted my request happily while blushing a bit.

[Then it's settled, I suppose.] (Wendelin)

The engagement between Erw and Haruka was smoothly set in stone like this. High Earl Mizuho stated his aristocratic opinion of [Though it's fine if it's a daughter of a retainer with a higher social rank], but Erw easily drew back by saying that Haruka is fine. Even Haruka's older brother can't go against an order from above.

Since there's also the fact that he lost in the duel against me, he is gladly accepting his younger sister's marriage on the surface.

In exchange for that, it became a famous sight of him staring at the two, who are happily training together every morning, while looking at them bitterly from the start to the end.

I think that you should rather do something about him than us three cooking here.

Also, Erw, who is full of happiness now that the marriage has been decided, was slightly annoying.

I haven't said anything since it was the same for me when I was newly-wed at first, but he is encouraging me to take lessons in katana techniques with a high tension.

[It will be nice if you take lessons from Haruka as well, Wend.] (Erwin)

[Nope.] (Wendelin)

Since Erw has a talent for handling katana, he has become a good pupil, but I will probably only get exhausted pointlessly even if I take lessons from her. Something like talent with katana is non-existent in me.

[Don't get killed in action due to being too cheerful. From time immemorial, soldier have said things like [I will marry once this war has ended...] and then actually died with a quite high probability.] (Wendelin)

[I have never heard something like that.] (Erwin)

[Really?]

[It's knowledge from some book...]

It seems that something like a death flag that has been often mentioned on earth doesn't exist.

At least Erw didn't know about it.

[I remember it.] (Ina)

[Ina knows about it.]

[It's probably from some story anyway.]

[However, authors wrote it from their past experience and it was also mentioned in documents. In addition there have even been children born and such...]

I didn't read them, but it seems Ina really had seen such story settings. There are people sensing something like such a rule even in a different world.

[Something so ill-omened for a married couple... I will hold a happy ceremony with Haruka after the war.] (Erwin)

Erw, who was at the peak of happiness, completely disregarded my and Ina's statements.

Because even I think that such rule is quite disturbing, I won't mind it if he ignores it completely as long as he makes sure to not be too merry.



“Rather than bothering with our cooking, do something about that depressing guy.”

It's not the fault of our cooking.

Even now we are popular due to Doushi distributing amazake to those interested. Amazake that's full of nutrition is good for one's health after working out.

Right, amazake is health food.

It's no different from drinking a sports drink after club activities.

“Even though he has been told off even by a big shot of the Battou Unit, is there anything you can do?”

Currently Haruka’s elder brother is looking at Erw and Haruka while bearing a grudge.

He is properly carrying out his training and work, but it has reached the point that a leader of the Battou Unit has come to Erw telling him [Please do something about this since the mood is getting worse].

Doushi gives him amazake as he considers him to look pitiful, but he drinks it all up in one go and once again looks at Erw with a hateful expression.

“Haruka, what does your onii-san like?”

“Umm, katana.” (Haruka)

A reply that was very easy to understand.

I guess they are a pair of younger sister and elder brother that resembled each other.

“In that case... O~~~~i, Haruka’s onii-san.”

“Earl Baumeister-sama, I don’t mind if you call me Takeomi...” (Takeomi)

Haruka’s brother throws a reproachful stare at Erw who stole his cute younger sister, but he normally expresses his respect to me who took him down in a duel as Earl.

Once I called out to him, he reverently bowed his head to me.

“As a matter of fact, I want you to try out the new orichalcum katana I requested some time ago.” (Wendelin)

Kaneda-san has already completed two sets of small and big katana in this short time.

[Once I got into it, I completely forget about the other katana.] (Kaneda)

Since it will interfere with his other work if he concentrates on them this much, he finished two sets of orichalcum katana first.

“Erw is still inexperienced with katana. Thus I’d like Takeomi-san to try out the new katana...” (Wendelin)

“Please leave it to me! No way, for me to try out an orichalcum katana while

I'm still alive..." (Takeomi)

I hear that for a samurai of the Mizuho people an orichalcum katana is the most valuable item they want to obtain one day.

From the view of a lower-ranked retainer such as Takeomi-san, it seems to be an item that will give him good luck by just swinging it.

"After breakfast we will come to this training area once again. It seems Kaneda-san will bring the completed orichalcum katana then."

"Leave it to me." (Takeomi)

The sullen expression completely vanished from Takeomi-san's face and instead it was brimming with delight that he will be able to test the new orichalcum katana directly after they have been finished.

"(Sword Junkie...) Umm. Because of that..." (Wendelin)

I have asked him to not show a displeased expression towards Erw.

Though I guess it's probably in vain.

He does his work properly. And since it's not like he's pointing such expression towards me, I have no basis to actually warn him about it.

"No matter how much you order me about it, Earl Baumeister-sama, this is a mere instinct." (Takeomi)

"Is that so...?" (Wendelin)

Due to that answer lacking any hesitation, it resulted in me understanding the sinfulness of being a sis-con from the bottom of my heart.



"It's a beautiful katana." (Takeomi)

"Once you look at it, the blade has a certain charming." (Elise)

Having eaten the breakfast prepared by Elise and the others, we once again gathered at the training area located in Earl Mizuho Country's national army's encampment.

Dozens of training puppets that wore the plate mails and shields of the dead from the rebel army, which had been plundered at the previous battle, have been deployed.

They were offered for testing the new katana since they are treated as scrap iron that has no other reuse but being melted down and getting recast due to their devastating damages.

The usual members of me, Elise and the other girls, Burkhart-san, Doushi, Haruka and Takeomi-san have assembled in front of the puppets.

In addition there were High Earl Mizuho and his close associates, and Kaneda-san together with his pupils who had prepared something like a small stand and placed the two sets of finished orichalcum katana on it.

Without delay Kaneda-san draws one of the orichalcum katana and displays its blade, but even Elise, who is unrelated to katana, is fascinated by its beauty. High Earl Mizuho and his retinue leaked sighs of admiration, too.

“As expected of you, Kaneda. Even compared to the work of the first Kaneda, there’s nothing inferior to be found. However, what’s disappointing is that those are not my katana.” (Toyomune)

The owner of these two sets of small and large katana was Erw. In exchange for those, the orichalcum-made sword that cut the rock golems in Herthania Valley like tofu is hanging at my waist. I switched it because I can still use swords normally.

“It’s usable as magician killer, isn’t it?”

“Yes, it will probably be a threat for any elementary magician.”

Burkhart-san revealed a complicated smile while looking at the shining blade. An orichalcum katana has the power to break through a lousy [Magic Barrier]. A magic katana possesses the same trait. if it’s a [Magic Barrier] deployed by an elementary magician, it’s possible for them to pierce through it. If it’s an orichalcum-made sword it will be difficult, but not so if it’s an orichalcum katana.

I guess this technology is the biggest factor why Earl Mizuho Country preserved its uniqueness.

“Earl Baumeister, it seems that you have requested the production of a further three sets, but...” (Toyomune)

“Yes.” (Wendelin)

“I wonder, would you sell them to me after all?” (Toyomune)

“Sell, you say? There are various things such as trade agreements that are tied after a war, right?” (Wendelin)

It was easy to merely sell it at market price, but that’s brainless. But I guess as someone calling himself a noble I have to make it possess further value for the sake of the Baumeister Earldom.

“(Is what Elise said, I think)” (Wendelin)

“You are gradually becoming underhanded like a noble, Earl Baumeister.” (Toyomune)

“After all I saw this many people die.” (Wendelin)

It seems to be like that for me and my wives, but even if this civil war gets settled, it will take time to correct the striking disparity in national power between the empire and the kingdom after the war.

Including the matter of us fighting in the empire while being treated as mercenaries, the number of nobles, who will treat me as enemy and try to use me, will probably increase in the kingdom as well.

The reaction of the royal family will be scary as well. That’s why I believed it necessary to form a connection with the empire and Earl Mizuho Country. Seeing that I can use the orichalcum katana as tool for that, it was indispensable to sell them as highly as possible.

“Even if I forcefully demanded them now, I guess I will only offend you, Earl Baumeister.” (Toyomune)

While High Earl Mizuho and I are talking, Takeomi-san, who received an orichalcum katana from Kaneda-san, calmly cuts the puppets apart in a series after getting ready.

The puppets that had plate mail equipped and were slashed through diagonally, exposed splendid cut ends.

“A steel plate mail cut in two equal parts...?” (Wendelin)

“That’s because Takeomi is a young swordsman with a lot of expectations. He has the slight tendency to go on a rampage if it involves his younger sister though...” (Toyomune)

It seems Takeomi-san’s swordsmanship skills are excelling to the degree that

even his lord is aware of them.

At the same time it seemed like the matter of him being a sis-con was famous as well though.

“I have decided to entrust Takeomi in your care for a while, too, Earl Baumeister.” (Toyomune)

“What’s this about?” (Wendelin)

“Do you know what Therese-dono is currently doing?” (Toyomune)

“I have heard that she’s at a meeting.” (Wendelin)

It’s wonderful that I haven’t been courted thanks to that, but it appears that those meetings are a pain in the neck according to what High Earl Mizuho says.

“Of course they are also a pain in the neck for Therese-dono and Alfons.” (Toyomune)

Since there was no battle for around one month, young Duke Baden and the others were apparently getting more and more impatient. Gathering supporters among the other nobles as well, they seem to demand for the occupation of a part of the cities and fortresses.

“Will they commit the foolishness of splitting our military forces at this point?” (Wendelin)

“As far as them not closing in on us in this month is concerned, it’s necessary to consider the possibility of a trap.” (Toyomune)

“What they desire are meritorious deeds and plunder?” (Wendelin)

“As expected, since it’s a civil war, the pillaging of common citizens and assaults against women and children will lead to decapitation.” (Toyomune)

Since it’s an act of an octopus eating its own feet, Therese has given out the directive that it’s strictly forbidden.

As young Duke Baden is aiming to become emperor as well, he will likely prevent pointlessly amassing infamy.

“However, there are exceptions.” (Toyomune)

There are the items looted after crushing the rebel army, and the military

funds as well as the reserve goods of the rebel army.

These would become reasonable earnings that can't be sneezed at.

“They seem to demand the capture of the Commercial City Halbert, 30 kilometres to the south from here. And also the strongholds in its vicinity.”
(Toyomune)

Young Duke Baden and the other apparently wanted to advance the front to the line of the several strongholds located in the surroundings of Halbert and change this field encampment in the Great Sorbid Wastelands into a safe rear base.

Therese and Alfons are rejecting that, but there are unexpectedly many nobles approving of that aggressive plan. It seems that the currently held meeting is about that.

“Is it all right for you to not participate, High Earl Mizuho?” (Wendelin)

“We have been totally left out.” (Toyomune)

The hard fighting of the samurai resounding even in the legends, the highly offensive power due to the magic katana and magic guns, the quality and quantity of magicians that isn't inferior at all; the Earl Mizuho Country's national army that obtained many achievements thanks to the powerful cavalry in the pursuit battle, was told to hold back this time by young Duke Baden.

“It's not like I want to become emperor either though.” (Toyomune)

“It might be about things like the division of territory after the war, I guess.”
(Wendelin)

Something bitter shadowed the face of High Earl Mizuho for an instant. Therese promised an increase of territory to Earl Mizuho Country for entering the war.

Also, there's the appointment as prince-electors household.

This can be seen as honour, but it's also something tying Earl Mizuho Country to the empire.

It seems they will be politely given a territory facing the sea.

That should be something delightful for the Mizuho people who love marine products, but as it will at the same time increase the territory they have to protect besides the Akitsu Basin, defence will become troublesome.

There's also the problem of ruling the people living in the new territory. Because there will be different races, it will cause various troublesome matters. Their true opinion is that they want to refuse it, but there's no way they can do that either. It's probably a delicate situation for High Earl Mizuho.

"That means that times are changing, but the consideration of how to advance the changes is difficult..." (Toyomune)

It means that difficult times in his leadership are closing in on High Earl Mizuho.

No matter whether they win or lose, the increase in work for royalty and nobles was bothersome.

"It's dangerous to make light of Therese-dono just because she's a woman. But I wonder whether she will be able to dismiss the aggressive plan of young Duke Baden and his supporters." (Toyomune)

Before I noticed, the testing of the new orichalcum katana switched over to Haruka.

It appears that her skills are slightly inferior to those of Takeomi-san, but there's no doubt that she's an expert.

As if she's cutting paper, she cut a puppet wearing full plate right in half.

"The younger sister possesses good skills as well. She might be the most suited as your guard, Earl Baumeister." (Toyomune)

"It seems that she's been a guard before, but is there some work for us as well?"

"That's very likely. Good grief, although it will be fine if we attack with just us..."

Concluding the testing of the new katana safely, it was decided that Erw and Haruka will use the two sets of orichalcum katana.

Since another set will be finished in three days, I planned to lend it to Takeomi-san who would accompany me.

"Even just lending is wonderful." (Takeomi)

Takeomi-san was very happy, but his face becomes frightening once he sees Erw after all.

If a sis-con can be aggravated up to this point, it might be splendid in a certain sense.

And, just as High Earl Mizuho has said, once we returned to our house, Therese lied in wait there while wearing a regretful expression.

“Sorry. I couldn’t ward off the opposition.” (Therese)

“Is it our turn as well?” (Wendelin)

“Together with the Earl Mizuho Country’s national army. The target is the Talberg Mountain Fortress.” (Therese)

Therese-sama spread a map on the table.

“Its location is around 20 km to the south-east from here. It’s a stronghold located on top of a trapezoid-shaped mountain with an altitude of around 600 meters.” (Therese)

“The main target, the commercial city, is the target of young Duke Baden and his followers?”

Monopolizing the flashy military gains to themselves, they apparently managed to push the bonus-like fortress to us.

Though, before that, I couldn’t detect the meaning in capturing that fortress.

“Time for mountain climbing?”

“Aren’t there any other fortresses, considering Burkhart-san’s age?” (Erwin)

“Don’t treat others like old people!” (Burkhart)

Burkhart-san’s fist drops on the head of Erw who said something unnecessary.

“Judging it just from the map, I can’t find any military significance or such, but...”

Even Doushi seems unable to grasp the intention behind capturing the Talberg Mountain Fortress.

“This fortress was a front-line base at the time when the empire was capturing the north.”

Having fulfilled its role, it’s nowadays existing as measure against brigands.

“Be that as it may, brigands don’t appear on the northern highway. It’s to the

degree of a robber appearing once in a while.” (Therese)

Since there’s a constant patrol of guards, it has conversely become easy to be caught by brigands who formed an alliance with conspirators.

So, if you ask why this fortress exists...

“If it’s left alone, strange folks will settle in there. And it belongs to the imperial army. They objected towards the reduction of posts.” (Therese)

Since being commander of the Talberg Mountain Fortress is an important post, there has been large opposition within the army when they tried to get rid of it.

Due to the strong resistance from within the army against lowering the posts they have been appointed to, they couldn’t cut it off until now.

“It’s similar to a story I heard somewhere else.”

“Anyone can understand that it’s a waste of military budget, but they are reluctant that their own posts and wages will disappear due to the reduction.”

There seems to be no difference between the kingdom and the empire in this regard.

“Besides, it’s not like there’s no use for it in the current war situation.”

Going by its location, it’s possible to apply tactics such as cutting the supply line and dispatching soldiers from there once we advance towards the imperial capital, Therese explains.

Therefore it’s necessary to place guards there after occupying it once, she says.

“That young Duke Baden isn’t a terrible idiot either.” (Katharina)

“He has ordinary ability befitting the heir of a Duke household. That’s why it’s troublesome in reverse.” (Therese)

Therese showed a baffled expression due to Katharina’s wicked tongue. In reality, he has formed a group that might be called his own faction approving of his aggressive plan in a short time.

“So, you are telling us to capture it by ourselves?”

“Of course not. It will be a joint operation with us.”

In the previous battle at the field encampment in the Great Sorbid Wastelands the achievements of the Mizuho national army, who even unleashed its new weapon, the magic guns, were enormous. Apparently that's why they have been removed from the responsibility of capturing Halbart which is the main target.

"We will send around 1500 troops. I will leave the command to my younger brother, but I don't want to incur any losses as much as possible." (Therese)

According to the reconnaissance personally sent out by High Earl Mizuho, there were apparently around 100 guards originally stationed in the Talberg Mountain Fortress, but it seems that Duke Nürnberg has already sent an additional reinforcement of 100 soldiers.

The Talberg Mountain Fortress is on the summit of the Talberg Mountain, allowing an invasion only on the mountain road continuing towards the summit. The fortress' front gate is only accessible from that mountain road. The rest of the fortress is surrounded by precipitous cliffs, according to the previous information.

"It looks like there will be losses."

"True."

The guards number 200 and there are no magicians. It's not like the guards are elites either.

But, if we were to foolishly storm the fortress' front gate with 1500 soldiers, that will probably cause heavy losses to arrows and such.

"How about shooting them with magic guns?"

"Although it depends on the distance, it's still impossible to snipe precisely. With the effect range being around 100 meters, that much is also in the counter-attack range of crossbows and longbows."

High Earl Mizuho likely doesn't want to suffer losses in a siege battle over a small fortress that hasn't much significance.

There's still the decisive battle against Duke Nürnberg after all.

"I guess there's no other choice but to somehow handle it with magic."

"I request that by all means. As for the reward, Therese-dono said that she

will add something special.”

“Haa...”

I dislike working for free, but in Therese’s case it highly likely that she will say something like “I will pay with my own body.”

As a man it might be considered as acceptable, but as war reward I feel like that’s too cheap.

Instead, if you think about the demerits, it’s actually a loss, I think.

“Earl Baumeister, Therese-dono likes you quite a bit. It’s difficult to match each other’s positions, isn’t it?”

“Yes.”

“She’s a beautiful woman if it weren’t for her being a Duchess though.”

Two days later after we performed the sword testing, a mixed army of 15.000 soldiers led by young Duke Baden and ten-odd nobles sortied to capture Halbert.

In addition the nobles also dispatched around 10.000 soldiers to take bases and strongholds in four places. The Mizuho national army and us were dispatched together with the soldiers to capture the Talberg Mountain Fortress as last. Therese stays back at the field encampment in the Great Sorbid Wastelands together with around 30.000 soldiers that were obtained as additional reinforcements from the rear.

She was apparently told to not advance to the front by young Duke Baden since she’s the supreme commander, but there’s the scramble for achievements and it seems that he dislikes her trying to depart to the battlefield since she’s a female family head.

“We will take it quickly and return?”

According to the reconnaissance, it’s planned for us to capture this place easily with the dispatched forces.

But, it doesn’t change the fact that our military forces have been split up. There’s even the possibility of us losing after suffering an unexpected surprise attack.

It was necessary to capture the Talberg Mountain Fortress swiftly by ourselves and to prepare for that.

“Wilma, how’s the new prototype magic gun?”

“Won’t know until using it.” (Wilma)

The march to the Talberg Mountain Fortress finished in a full two days. The Mizuho national army was on standby at a place where the arrows from the the fortress’ front gate won’t reach and just now we sent a messenger to advice them to surrender.

It might be fortunate that there was no surprise attacks yet, but there’s also the reason that they won’t be able to stage a surprise attack anyway because there’s no other means of attack except by using the mountain road. Since there won’t be any dead or injured if they surrender obediently, there’s no loss in trying.

[We are thankful for your recommendation to surrender, but our orders are to defend to the last man.]

But then again we ended up getting splendidly declined by the fortress’ defence commander in such way.

“I wondered whether I will snipe them with magic, but I never expected for there to be such prototype.”

Asking Wilma about her condition was because it was a prototype magic gun I had borrowed from High Earl Mizuho.

Its barrel is long, and it has a scope for aiming and rifling that has been attempted for the first time. The gunstock’s shape has been improved as well. Theoretically it seems to be possible to snipe a target at a distance of around 300 meters, but this magic sniping gun was a so-called defective product. You can’t shoot more than once with the magic gem provided due to its bad efficiency on the mana consumption.

“Wend-sama, using this or shooting with magic, which is more efficient?”
(Wilma)

“As a matter of fact it’s this prototype sniper rifle.” (Wendelin)

Although it would be fine to fire my own nut-shaped bullets with tungsten content with magic just like before, the mana consumption will become large if it’s sniping at this distance.

I pondered whether I should loose off shells with large-scale magic, but it won't accomplish its meaning as defensive base if we don't hand it over to the following guards after capturing it without damaging it as much as possible. Accordingly it resulted in me entrusting it to Wilma who is familiar with the treatment of weapons by supplying mana to her.

Actually magic guns have also been lent to Erw, Haruka and Takeomi-san. Since they were a loan, we couldn't keep them, but since they will become unusable without their regular secret maintenance anyway, there should be no meaning in keeping them either.

The other day young Duke Baden and his followers looked regretful as they failed in obtaining magic guns.

“Wend-sama, whom do I target?” (Wilma)

“Umm...” (Wendelin)

Wilma and I fell back slightly behind Mizuho's national army and observed the state of the fortress with binoculars and scope on top of a huge rock that was off the mountain road.

On top of the walls around 50 soldiers have prepared their bows and are setting up ballistae for defence.

And there were several commanding officers giving them orders as well as their subordinates.

“First the commander, I suppose.” (Wendelin)

“Affirmative. I will try shooting him first.” (Wilma)

Wilma displayed ability matching the warriors of the Mizuho national army's magic gun squad that had been present at the previous test firing, but this time she will aim at a human and not an artificial target.

It was also possible that she will fail after getting shaken unexpectedly.

“Are you all right?” (Wendelin)

“Yes.” (Wilma)

“Don't force yourself.” (Wendelin)

“I'm your wife and also your spear and shield, Wend-sama. That's why I will be fine.” (Wilma)

Wilma continues her unusual speech while setting up the magic sniping gun.

“Wend-sama, you created a place and time where I can enjoy myself.”
(Wilma)

Wilma couldn't marry into a normal noble household due to her Hero Syndrome.

Luckily she was picked up by Minister Edgar, but I guess it would still be difficult for her to marry anyone besides me.

No matter how much physical strength she possesses, she won't be able to serve in the current royal army. Therefore she would have no other choice but to earn the money for her own food expenses as adventurer or by working behind the scenes as protege hidden by Minister Edgar.

“If I'm together with you, every day is fun, Wend-sama. Therefore I will dye my body with the sin of killing people, whose faces I don't know, to protect this place I call home. I will egotistically kill people for the sake of those who know you and me, Wend-sama.” (Wilma)

“I see. Truth to be told, I'm the same as well.” (Wendelin)

I will kill Duke Nürnberg, who has staged a rebellion and is freely using a device that blocks my sole prided magic, and then I will destroy that device. For that reason I'm continuing after having already killed several hundred people.

“It also the same for Erw, Elise-sama, Ina, Luise and Katharina.” (Wilma)

They probably became my friends out of selfish interests at first, but now we are sharing a common destiny.

Therefore even Elise has accompanied us to the capture of the Talberg Mountain Fortress.

“Let's finish this quickly and think up a menu for dinner, okay?” (Wendelin)

“That's nice.” (Wilma)

Wilma loads a bullet that had its size adjusted by me into the sniper rifle. All magic guns are loaded from the front. The bullets themselves are round just like those of matchlocks.

However, since a round ball is useless for rifling, I matched the chinquapin nut

shaped bullet, that I use to make them fly with mana, with the gun barrel by adjusting its size with magic.

“It enters smoothly.” (Wilma)

Wilma loaded the gun barrel with a bullet she received from me. Putting aside the gun barrel, there are many strange contrivances in the magic gun. Since the bullet is fired with mana instead of gunpowder, the magic gem has been completely embedded. The bullet will be discharged once the trigger is pulled, but I don't understand why the bullet is fired by mana if you pull the trigger. Until now the research of similar items should have been carried out by both countries, but it not being completed might come from the difficulty of the contrivances within.

“The magic contrivance that fires the bullet once the trigger is pulled is unknown.”

If it's gunpowder, it explodes once ignited, but since it's an artificial reproduction of a contrivance that transforms magic to fire the bullet with mana that had been stored in the magic gem, it was a complete riddle for me as magician. This is probably the reason why Duke Nürnberg is cautious of Earl Mizuho Country that resolved this.

“I can fire the bullet at any time now.” (Wilma)

“Just as you have said, Wilma. We will finish them off starting with the commanding officers.” (Wendelin)

I confirmed the figure of the defence commander, who is giving orders on top of the fortress' wall, with my binoculars. There are also his aides and commanding officers, but they will be treated as targets as well.

“Let's weaken their morale by killing their superiors. After all that's the most efficient method. There won't be any pointless victims either.”

“Got it.”

When Wilma, who had prepared the magic sniping gun, pulls the trigger, the defence commander, who was reflected in my binoculars, gets vigorously blown away to the rear and collapses.

His aides, who were next to him, tried to save him in a hurry, but considering that Wilma has little experience in sniping, it was accurate.

Watching their superior die after getting hit in the head by a bullet and spurting out blood and grey matter, they were apparently trembling in fear,

“Wilma.” (Wendelin)

“Next.” (Wilma)

Next she picks an adjutant-like person, two commanding officers and a man, who is ordering around the archer unit slightly away, as targets.

All of them were hit in their head or torso and they died instantly or became incapable of fighting.

“The gun barrel is...”

Due to strange circumstances, the magic gun will have its gun barrel heat up after shooting around five shots and won't be able to fire any further until the barrel cools down.

The Mizuho national army forcefully cools them by sprinkling water on them, but the magic sniping gun that I had given Wilma cooled down swiftly due to a [Cooling] spell.

With this there's also no worry for the gun barrel to become wet.

“Next is the personnel operating the ballistae.”

Wilma continues the shooting and picks the soldiers handling the ballistae on top of the walls next.

At first relief personnel rushes over immediately once one of them gets shot, but realizing that they will be shot if they move there, before long no one approaches the ballistae anymore.

Next the sniping of the archers starts. Once three of them were killed, all of the remaining archers tossed their bows away and escaped from atop the wall.

There was also a soldier stopping them, but since he wasn't an overly distinguished person, no one listened to him.

That's because the majority of the important people had already departed from

this world.

“Wend-sama, there are no people left to shoot at.” (Wilma)

“Well, it looks like it’s not necessary anymore.”

Having one-sidedly killed their important people from a long distance, there are no stratagems they can accomplish by themselves.

With their morale crushed, several white flags fluttered in the wind on the walls.

“Did they capitulate?”

Like this we were successful in capturing the Talberg Mountain Fortress without a single casualty among our allies.



“This is a success? No, it’s probably a blunder.”

“But, Wend, the fortress fell normally.” (Erwin)

“It’s as Erw-san says. Moreover, the casualties among our allies are zero.”
(Haruka)

“Just as mentioned by Haruka-san, zero casualties is wonderful.” (Erwin)

The Talberg Mountain Fortress that had raised white flags, was occupied by the Mizuho national army without any particular disorder.

Their leaders below the commanding officer were defeated albeit by sniping.

We succeeded in neutralizing the ballistae and archer unit that would have likely become the main cause for casualties appearing if we carried out a siege battle. And as an extra the Talberg Mountain Fortress had no damages and thus needed no repairs.

Although we had the biggest achievements here, the one who will actually fork out a reward is Therese.

That’s because we are mercenaries that had been employed by Therese.

Since we are accompanied by military officers who record the distinguished war services for the time being, it shouldn’t result in a falsification of the merits of wars and rewards.

The expression of the branch family’s head Toyotsuge Tamura Mizuho-san, who

is the younger brother of High Earl Mizuho and who leads the Mizuho national army, is grim, but that doesn't mean that he's jealous of my accomplishments. He's displeased for another reason.

"We got screwed over." (Toyotsuge)

"Indeed. The storehouse was empty."

The privilege to the stuff like the storehouse located in the Talberg Mountain Fortress and the activity funds in the safe that should be located in the main building has been handed over to Mizuho national army, but when Toyotsugesan had his retainers examine those places, there was apparently almost nothing in them.

Even the storehouse that kept the provisions hadn't stored anything but the share of one week's food for the guards.

"Screwed over?"

"That's right. Is it normal to leave behind food for around a week in the emergency stores of a fortress located in the mountains?"

"However, it was a mountain fortress with no particular bandits or such in the vicinity, right?"

"It seems to be a fortress for the sake of preserving posts, but now it has become a defence base of the rebel army. Usually they would at least carry in some food, no? Besides, ordinarily one won't supply goods to just scrape along on such a summit. It will just cause expenses after all."

Erw showed his consent towards Burkhart-san's conjecture.

"The issue beyond this would be the other bases doing the same."
(Armstrong)

"Uncle-sama, do you mean that it's a trap to lure us in?" (Elise)

Since there were only casualties of the enemy army after the battle, Elise was together with Doushi as there was no necessity for her to use healing magic. Even Ina and the others are here since they had nothing in particular to do, but the talk we had started to waste some time is gradually turning grave.

"Were our allies lured in by them deliberately keeping the storage of

materials and provisions low and thinning out the defence?" (Ina)

"It's probably just as you are expecting, Ina."

We were able to capture it easily, but if we consider the food and materials consumed by our side who had dispatched soldiers on this occasion, we are in the red.

At any rate, we could only secure a little amount of food.

Even so, if we can maintain the city and strongholds we captured, it will balance out, but as it will be necessary to replenish those, it will cost money as well.

"Or rather, we might get surrounded in a state of lacking food before that, right?" (Luise)

As Luise says, since we hurriedly went on the offensive, we don't possess many provisions.

It was decided to leave that to the supply unit that followed us in a delayed fashion, but we won't be able to do anything if the rebel army severs our supply line.

Even if we try to protect that supply unit, it might be the end once we get surrounded by the enemy army while in the fortress.

Especially this Talberg Mountain Fortress is a stronghold that is by all rights easy to defend solidly.

That's because there's only one route to capture the summit, but if you turn that around, we will lose our way out once that mountain road gets blocked.

"There's only food for 200 people for a week, and it's not like we have that much on hand either." (Wilma)

Wilma doesn't state anything but the truth.

But in reverse you could say that the situation got severe.

There was a bad premonition popping up in my mind, but it immediately turned into reality.

"Wendelin-san!" (Katharina)

Katharina, who was on watch on top of the wall, rushed our way in a great hurry.

"It seems that we have been surrounded by the rebel army." (Katharina)

“As expected, eh...”

As if estimating the time when we would capture the Talberg Mountain Fortress, Katharina reports that a great number of rebel soldiers had appeared on the mountain road in front of the main gate.

“In other words, we lost our way out.”

The numbers of the rebel army should be higher than those of our allies, but they most likely won't come attacking unreasonably. That's because they are expecting us to have no leeway in our food situation. If they wait while only blocking the mountain road, our side will exhaust its food reserves in around a week. Even if Therese tries to send supplies, those are bound to not arrive either.

“With us, who are stuck in the Talberg Mountain Fortress, as extreme example, it's inevitable for our allies, who headed to the other capture targets, to lose, isn't it?”

It's possible that the other fortress capture units are experiencing the same situation as us. The Halbart capture group around young Duke Baden might have been surrounded by a simply superior rebel army. It seems possible that the even the previous crushing victory will come to nothing with this time's defeat.

“That damned Therese. She couldn't reign in that young Duke Baden.”

He had done something foolish, but it would be unfavourable if young Duke Baden and his followers get killed just like that. However, currently we have to do our best about our own troubles.

“We will discuss the response with Toyotsuge-dono. However, it will be awkward, I guess.”

On top of not knowing the numbers of the rebel army outside, there's the danger of increasing the casualties all the more if we move unskillfully. We hurry to Toyotsuge-dono's location. It's in order to procure just the slightest information about the enemy army besieging us.